

The Unlikely Vacation

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Fiction By AZOutback

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The Unlikely Vacation picks up where *The Unlikely Announcements* left off. An out-of-state job for family lead to what would become an Unlikely (and permanent) Vacation for The Merlot "Family".

Chapter 1: The Details and Dinner with Friends

The final evening at The Cheshire's Farm, Andy and Lindsay along with Sara and I were sitting out on the patio having a beer. Andy commented, "Too bad we wouldn't be able to relocate out here...you know...the four of us get a place together...sure would be nice..."

I asked, "If am not sure you are being serious, but if you are..."

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Upon our return to Arizona, Gary met us at the Phoenix airport and took us back to the Sagebrush House. The McGrawl's made no mention to Gary of their intent of moving back in with us. After Gary left Andy and Lindsay discussed more details with Sara and I as they had talked among themselves on the flight back. Andy asked to see me in my office, "So, this is a good size room. Could we have my desk, your old desk in the corner over here?"

I looked around and noticed there was still huge amount of space between the windows and the doorway, "Yeah, that can work." We returned to the studio and noticed Lindsay and Sara were in there. I asked them, "So, Lindsay and Sara, are you two are okay with not having a desk for your weekly Budget Holstein meetings?"

Lindsay explained, "Since I really use a tablet during the meetings it is fine. Kayré and Kacie also use tablets so when the four of us meet on Sundays. We do a conference call with Jo Jo at Gold Canyon and Miss Kitty at the Oro Valley locations. Now, you did mention you still have one of our chaise lounges in your storage?"

I replied, "Yes. We can take out one of these tables and put the chaise lounges in the same area. I will move the table into the shop, give Andy a place to work on PC's and setup his lab."

Andy commented, "So, we'll have two bedroom sets we will need to sell. Along with some of the other furniture we just bought."

I asked, "You still have the set that Linda sold you a while back?"

Lindsay replied, "Oh yeah, the cowboy western set from back when she got her condo. It is on our guest room."

I told them, "Okay, we'll work out something for that one since I do want to keep that set. I could put that set up in the FROG, which will be a guest room for my mother and Blanche when they come out on Christmas or whenever. I'll keep the Alaskan King in the guest room it is presently for when Maya and Peaches or Laura and Miss Kitty stay."

Sara added, "Or Martina. Though she hasn't been staying with us lately."

I confirmed, "Yeah, Marc is for the most part done with Idaho now. Okay, so I better try to get a hold of Mick and see when he can convert the FROG. I was thinking the room could double as playroom for Lindsay and Sara. Sort like the Quail Suite at the other house was supposed to be until Kayré and Kacie moved in with us."

Sara joked, "Ah so the High Infidelity Suite 3.0!"

I laughed, "Yeah, that's one way of looking at that." I looked at the giant yet functional clock behind my desk over in my office, "So we have a couple hours until dinner. Wynn won't be back until tomorrow, so unless y'all want to do Vinnie's we can go out for dinner tonight."

Sara stated, "I am so tired of Vinnie's I think we should go out somewhere. Andy and Lindsay are you two joining us?"

Andy commented, "Well, Lindsay and I were going to be heading back to our condo. But, it is not like we are far. We can come meet up back here a little later."

Andy and Lindsay left. Sara commented, "Well this is unexpected. You okay with them coming back here?"

I assured her, "Yes, I am okay with them returning. What I am not okay with is how things are currently. That being how the house is so empty and quiet. Anyway, I need to get a hold of Dundee and see if/when he can do the FROG." Sara told me she was going to take a long soak.

I called Dundee and he answered, "Hey Ron, long time since I have heard from you. What's going on?"

I told him, "Well, I have a project for you at the Sagebrush house. Need to

convert the FROG into some type of a guest suite."

Dundee told me, "Can do that...might not be right away...but can do that."

I explained, "In theory, really won't need it until around December. Though I might have my mother and her partner up this way sooner or may be not. But, yeah December is the absolutely positively the latest it can be ready."

Dundee advised me, "I think we can squeeze you in sometime in mid-August. I'll get back to you on that."

Later that afternoon Lindsay and Andy had returned, both very sharply dressed. As they walked in I joked, "I didn't get the memo, what are we doing?"

Lindsay giggled, "Sara didn't tell you?"

I replied, "Last I heard from her she was going to take a long soak."

Andy laughed, "Well, she wants to take us to Fleming's to celebrate our returning."

Lindsay added, "Martina and Marc are going to be joining us as well."

I laughed, "Sara using him for his discount?"

Lindsay replied confused, "No...it was my idea."

Well that was awkward and decided before I inserted my foot any deeper into my mouth I'd leave the room, "Okay, well let me get changed then. What time are we due?"

Sara came out of the main suite dressed the same as Lindsay; the formal black corset with gold hardware Linda had given her and Lindsay during Christmas along with a short skirt and ankle boots paired with black stockings. She explained, "Marc and Martina should be here shortly. I believe we have reservations for six. They can ride with us as Andy and Lindsay will take their own car."

I told her, "Works for me." I headed into the main suite to change into something a little more dressier. While I was changing the doorbell chimed. I returned a couple minutes later to find Marc dressed like a (respectable) used car salesman and Martina in a pink corset and black mini skirt with black stocking and pink heels. I walked into the Great Room and asked, "Okay, we ready?" Everyone nodded, "Marc and Martina you are with Sara and I. You get to ride in our new Murano."

During dinner whilst we waited for our food Martina asked Andy and Lindsay, "So when are you two moving back in?"

Andy told her, "Within the next couples weeks, may be even sooner. We have a little over a month before we need to be out, but can do this slowly."

I wondered, "When are you going to talk to Gary and/or Bambi about using the Acme Truck?"

Andy hesitated, "Kind of hoping we would not need to do that?"

I reminded him, "If you are going to be bringing a bedroom set, your desk and the chaise; you are going to need their help. It ain't going to fit in the Murano and sure ain't going to fit in Lindsay's Mini."

Lindsay once again pushed Andy, "At some point we are going to have to tell them. I don't get why you feel ashamed to tell them we are moving back in with Sara and Ron. You've already told Marc and Martina, though that was more of my doing."

Andy laughed, "Okay, I'll call them in the next couple days."

Marc changed the subject, "So you liking that Murano? Thinking about retiring the Chick Magnet as just not very suitable for when I wine and dine clients. Usually end up having to use Martina's Jag."

I told him, "So far, really impressed. We took it down to Oro Valley a couple weeks ago and it handled the roads really well. Gas mileage is fairly decent for an SUV. Think it was a bit better than The Cruiser. But then, you really don't have much of a commute."

Our food had arrived. After we were done Sara paid for dinner and joked, "Well there went my commission checks from The Bordeaux Account!"

I joked, "Wow, you actually spent your own money and it wasn't on Lindsay!"

Lindsay playfully objected, "Hey!"

Andy told us, "Well, we need to get going."

Lindsay and Martina hugged. Martina asked her, "See you on Saturday for Yoga?" Lindsay told Martina 'yes'.

The four of us returned to the house. While Sara and Martina chatted I had Marc come into my office. I handed him a card for the sales manager I had worked with for The Murano, "Here, give this lady a call. Tell her I sent you and she can

get you a good deal.”

Marc laughed, “Well, this is a switch, usually *I'm* the one getting you a deal. I better get going.”

I told him, “Good idea, don't want leave those two by themselves for too long. Who's knows what evil plans they are plotting against us. She did teach Sara how to milk my prostate while sucking me off.”

Marc added, “She could be trying to talk Sara into putting you into a smaller non-metal super secure chastity device...”

We walked back into the Great Room and the two of them suddenly became quiet and tried to look innocent. Marc asked me, “Should we be worried?”

I told him, “Don't let their appearances fool you!”

Chapter 2: Welcome Back Wynn and a 'New and Improved' Martina?

Sunday morning Sara and I headed up to Carefree for breakfast. After we ordered I got a call on my cell from Wynn, “Morning Ron. Hope I didn't wake you.”

I assured her, “No you're fine. Sara and I are having breakfast up in Carefree. What's up?”

Wynn explained, “Well, for one I wanted to find out if you all had returned from Tennessee.”

I told her, “Yeah, we got back in yesterday afternoon.”

Wynn continued, “Okay. I'm going to do a brunch with my ladies then head back up. Should be back in early afternoon.”

I confirmed, “Sounds good, see you this afternoon.”

After breakfast we returned to the house. Sara headed over to Kayré and Kacie's residence for their weekly Budget Holstein meeting. Once The McGrawl's returned they would be holding the meetings in the library/studio here; if I didn't know any better I'd think it was so they all could play after their meeting. I checked the freelance triage job sites looking for some small or medium size triage jobs. I found a couple I wanted to bid on and one that had a set commission I was willing to accept. I was working on one of those jobs when Wynn returned. She knocked on my office doors and I motioned her to come in. She asked, “Am I disturbing you from your work?”

I told her, "No, no. You're fine, I am at a stopping point anyway."

Wynn asked, "So how did it go with The Cheshire's?"

I explained, "Fairly well actually. Neat little cafe and gift shop in a beautiful area. Seems to be a fairly simple job. We were even able to get the original site plans from the county, so Laura was able to spec out the equipment needed. If we do this, she will be part of the job; just remotely. I'll get the basic configurations done on the networking devices she can remote in and upload the configs. Charlotte told me they would get back to us sometime this week. How was your trip."

Wynn laughed, "Tiring, but fun. I got to spend quite a bit of time with friends I hadn't seen in years. Any news from Gary?"

I told her, "Surprisingly, not yet. I know Bunny is due any day now. Has Sara talked to you?"

Wynn seemed a bit puzzled by that question, "Um...no....haven't seen her. Why?"

I replied, "Oh yeah...she still over at Kayré and Kacie's place for their company meeting. So, the last night we were in Tennessee the four of us had a bit of reckoning chat..."

Wynn was not sure where this was heading, "Oh boy...what now?"

I told her, "Well...The McGrawl's are going to move back in with us. Likely in the next week or so."

Wynn thought for a moment as not sure if this was a good thing or bad thing, "What the hell happened?"

I laughed, "Nothing drastic, they just realized they were not that happy being by themselves and Sara and I feel the same way. They will take the Northern suite; Andy will setup my old desk over in the corner though he really doesn't expect to use it much. Sara and Lindsay will have Kayré and Kacie over on Sundays and will do their weekly Budget Holstein status meetings in the studio/library. I am going to move one of the tables into the shop so Andy has a place to work on project PC's and setup his lab. They will bring their chaise lounge back and I'll get the other one out of the FROG, setting those up in the studio. So Martina and you will have one less table to move, but instead will have to contend with a couple Chaise lounges during Saturday Yoga. At some point I am going to have Dundee work on finishing the FROG. It will double as a guest suite for when my Mother and Blanche are here for Christmas and then as retreat for Sara and Lindsay."

Wynn laughed, "Hmm....why does this sound so familiar? Oh yeah the infamous Quail Suite at the Fairy Duster house!"

I laughed in agreement, "Yep, that really didn't go as planned with Kayré and Kacie taking it over. So in theory this will be The High Infidelity Suite 3.0! Dundee was saying mid August he might be able to squeeze us in. I am fine as long as it is done by December when my mother and Blanche come up with Laura and Miss Kitty."

Wynn commented, "So I am guessing you are okay with them returning or is it more Sara didn't give you a choice?"

I replied, "Sara does not have that much control over me....I don't think. No, all four of us agreed it was for the best. Sara and I both agree the house is just way too empty and quiet. Think about it for the past 12+ years since you've been working for us we've always had people staying with us. Maya, The McGrawl's, then Maya left, but came back with Peaches after their 'fallout' in Chugwater. Then they left and then Kayré and Kacie joined us. Plus Martina has been here off and on." I laughed "...yeah Martina; funny her and Lindsay seem to be BFF's now. It just seems odd to me, I don't why."

Wynn commented, "I can't really judge, never really knew her that much. She seems like she is a nice person..."

I told her, "Yes she is, never said she wasn't. She did some questionable things while we were married...including sleeping with my sister. However, she has 'grown up' over the years almost seems as if now she is a 'new and improved' version of herself. Ironically, I think Marc has a lot to do with it. Which if you *really* knew Marc you'd be surprised. She is so much more responsible now. Perhaps it does have to do with her working a professional job and not out clubbing all the time, even though that was her 'job' years prior. Now, she leads Yoga and Ballet classes at the resort."

Wynn added, "Don't forget about the Saturday yoga sessions she does here!"

I laughed, "Yeah, which is awesome as we get use out of this studio. But, like I said we all agree The McGrawl's coming back would benefit everyone, including you."

Wynn asked, "So what we are doing for dinner tonight?"

I replied, "Not Vinnie's, Sara is tired of it. We all went out last night with Marc and Martina who were invited by Lindsay to Fleming's. I suppose whatever you can do for the three of us."

Wynn assured me, "I can make something for just the three of us. I need to go to the market anyway."

Chapter 3: Cheshire Farms Update and An Unlikely Request

The following week was back to our 'normal' routine, which at this point was Sara working at The Budget Holstein and me doing the triage consulting jobs. Andy called mid-week, "Hey Ron. So, we can start moving in this coming weekend. Talked to Bambi and she can help me out. Any word from The Cheshire's?"

I gotten so back into the routine I had forgotten about The Cheshire's, "Um...actually no. Charlotte had said sometime this week. It doesn't mater to me either way, though it is a nice escape from our summer here. I did talk to Dundee and he told me mid-August he might be able to work on the FROG. I suppose that Western/Cowboy bedroom set we can stick down in the garage below the FROG until it is done. There is some room in that garage that is not taken up by Sara's Roadrunner. So Saturday y'all will start moving back in?"

Andy told me, "No, Sunday. Still need to work my Friday/Saturday double-shift at the Fountain Hills store. I think Lindsay is meeting with one of her premier clients on Saturday too. Oh hey, I have a quick question: Since I won't have an office, is there room in the library/studio for me to display my 'collection'?"

I explained, "Seeing as this library is not as large, not really. However, there is still a lot of barren shelves in the office itself. We can work something out in that regards."

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That Friday Wynn paged me, "Leslie holding for you on the office line."

I answered the office line, "AZ Outback, Ron."

Leslie replied, "Good morning Ron, Leslie McKee. So, my daughter and her husband have talked this over and they do want to move forward with the upgrades at Cheshire Farms Cafe. However, they are asking that if possible you can hold off until they shut-down for 'summer vacation' at the end of August."

I advised, "Well, let me check our schedule and see what lead time I have for getting the equipment drop shipped." I checked my calendar and noticed we were still four weeks out and nothing was currently scheduled, "Schedule wise looks good. We have more than enough time for my supplier to drop ship the network equipment and Square is usually within one or two weeks. I still need to check with McGrawl's and Sara as we likely would spend more time out there instead of

flying in, doing the install and flying right back out."

Charlotte laughed, "Funny you say that...the grand kids keep asking when Auntie Lindsay and Sara are coming back!"

I advised her, "Well, I'll get back to you likely Monday and let you know for sure. I'll have a chance to talk to The McGrawl's over the weekend." Leslie advised me that would be fine.

I checked the time and it was still early morning. I decided I should let Laura know what was going on. I called her work number, "Dove Mountain IT, Abby speaking."

I told her, "Hey Laura, Ron here. So I talked to Leslie and they have given us a green light for the Cheshire Farms project. It will likely be sometime towards the end of August as they want to wait until they close for 'summer vacation'. Still need to run this past the McGrawl's as well as Sara since we'd spending the entire week out there."

Laura seemed distracted, "Hmm...end of August you say. Um let me chat with Miss Kitty and I'll get back to you. Need to go."

I was a bit confused by what Laura had just said. I gave Andy a call next, "Hey Andy. So I heard back from Leslie earlier and the Cheshire Farms project is a go as long as we do it at the end of August. Also she said the grand kids were asking when Auntie Sara and Lindsay would be back."

Andy asked, "What about Uncle Andy?"

I laughed, "Nope and there was no mention of Uncle Ron either."

Andy wondered, "Guess were just not cool enough. So the end of August...okay...not that it much matters, but curious as to why then?"

I explained, "They shut down the cafe and shop for a summer vacation that week. Would that work for you and Lindsay?"

Andy told me, "We are far enough out I can make arrangements on my end. Lindsay might be a wild card, depends if she has any of her clients scheduled during that time. I'll talk to her later and she should able to tell you when she comes back to your place with Sara tonight."

I had forgotten it was Friday already, "Oh yeah, it is Friday. That will work. So, see you tomorrow night or Sunday?"

Andy told me, "Tomorrow night, I'll still pick up Lindsay so we can finish packing."

Once I wrapped up with Andy I paged Wynn to my office. She walked in wearing a very short purple dress with black fishnet stockings and ankle boots, "Good timing Ron, was going to head over to Sprout's and The Market."

I joked, "Got a hot date planned with one of the cashiers?" Wynn ignored my joke, "Hmm, crickets...okay then. The Cheshire's want to go forward with the project...at the end of August. I talked to Andy and he seems to be okay with that time frame and would have Lindsay let me know tonight."

Wynn was confused, "Why does it matter with Lindsay?"

I told her, "Because, we would spend about a week out there. We'd do a vacation besides the install which would likely only take a day. Plus, the grand kids have been asking when Auntie Sara and Lindsay would be back!"

Wynn understood but wondered, "Ah...how cute. Do you want me there as project manager...?"

I hadn't really given much thought, "Not sure. You normally don't do the out-of-state with the exception of Acme Vegas..." My office line was ringing: Laura's cell, "...oh hey Laura what's up?"

Laura explained, "I know this going to sound like an odd request, but if we are doing the Cheshire Farm's project in end August, can I come along?"

I was really surprised, "You're right, that *is* an odd request! Why?"

Laura laughed, "I need to get away from here...and by away I mean outside of Tucson so I can't be on call. Miss Kitty is fine with me being gone, we are needing some time apart anyway. I'd bring Sophie if that is okay."

I was flabbergasted, "I...I think so. Let me get back to you on that." I hung up with Laura extremely confused.

Wynn saw my confusion and asked, "What the hell was that all about?"

I was still trying to process Laura's request, "She wants to come with us and bring Sophie. Says she wants to get away not sure if was from just the resort or Miss Kitty too. The barn has four bedrooms, so there would be enough space if you want to come along as well. I guess Leslie stays in the main house with Dave and Charlotte plus the grand kids. I don't think we'd be able to fly commercial though. Perhaps I can have Marc charter us a flight out there. I still need to consult with The McGrawl's and Sara."

Wynn told me, "I wouldn't mind coming. Well, I want to get some groceries to be prepared for The McGrawl's returning."

I laughed, "Yeah Andy and his tapeworm. Since I have totally forgotten what the heck I was working on, think I'll grab some Subway. Want to join me?"

Wynn smiled, "That would be nice, yes."

We headed over to Subway and had lunch. The ladies working the sandwich line were in awe over Wynn's outfit. Afterwards we went to Sprout's and The Market where again she was getting some interesting (and in a good way) looks. Upon walking into Sprout's I was amazed, "Wow, this is a good size. They've been building these so small lately."

That afternoon Sara and Lindsay came into my office. Lindsay advised me, "Sara and I don't have any clients scheduled for the last week of August through Labor Day Monday. So I hear the grand kids were asking about us?"

I laughed, "Yes, they were. But, apparently no mention of Andy or I..." My office line was ringing and again it was Laura, "...hmm....Laura is calling me...again. What's going on Sis?"

Laura explained, "I am taking three weeks off, due back the Friday after Labor Day."

I wondered how she managed to pull that off, "That's a lot of time. Didn't think they'd let you take that much at once."

Laura admitted, "Neither did I, but I told them I was getting burned out with these 6-day work weeks. Plus I kinda bluffed that the University of Arizona had been in contact with me..."

I wasn't sure if she was serious being U of A was ASU's rival, "Really, U of A contacted you about a job?"

Laura laughed, "Not exactly, it was for their Master's Program. However, the resort management seemed spooked by this and told me I could take all my accrued vacation at once. I have almost four weeks, but want to save some for when we come up with Mother and Blanche for Christmas. I should be around two-weeks at that point."

I understood, but wondered, "Okay, that makes sense. Is there trouble in paradise with you and Miss Kitty?"

Laura avoided directly answering my question, "I'll say we need some time apart. She has a lot going on with the Budget Holstein right now. I think Linda is going to give her the reins at Oro Valley very soon. Anyway, let me know when you know more."

I told her I would. Turning my attrition back to Sara and Lindsay, "Where was I? Oh yeah, no mention of 'Uncle Ron or Andy'. Curious has Linda been in contact or communicated anything with you two?"

Lindsay replied, "No, why do you ask?"

I told her, "Oh something odd Laura mentioned...not important. Anyway, so y'all's schedules are free then. So Wynn would join us and believe or not so would Laura and Sophie." Before they stated asking questions which I was not prepared to answer I shooed them out my office, "Now, I need to get back to work. Totally lost track of what I was doing with this project."

Sara understood, "Okay, we'll be in the play loft until dinner."

I decided to give Marc a call, "Afternoon sir, I have peculiar situation and need some assistance which would require your unique expertise."

Marc was intrigued, "Okay, do tell Ron!"

I explained, "So we are going to be doing The Cheshire Farms project at the end of August out in Tennessee. We plan on spending around a week out there as it would be vacation as well. Now, here is where things get a bit weird, I had talked to Laura about this last week and the plan was for her to do her part remotely. I talked to her earlier today to fill her in on the timeline and now she wants to join us...in Tennessee."

Marc agreed, "That is indeed peculiar, but am not understanding what you need my assistance with."

I explained further, "So we would be flying and you know how Laura is about flying. Furthermore The McGrawl's and Wynn would be going besides Sara and I....plus Sophie. Perhaps you can hook us up with some type of charter flight, something with a Learjet or Gulfstream?"

Marc thought for a moment, "Ah you did mention my expertise. So correct me if I wrong, but you would have seven people?" I did the math in my head and confirmed, "Yeah, that would work. Do you know when yet and how much cargo?"

I advised him, "Not sure when. The equipment would be dropped shipped so, just

our tool bags and luggage. Laura and Sophie are going to be up here prior. I think I'll have a better idea next week once I talk to Leslie again."

Marc told me, "Well, when you know more let me know and I'll hook you up. Oh, I retired the Chick Magnet today. Got a shiny new Murano, thanks for the lead."

After dinner I went back to work on the same project I should have finished a few hours prior. Lindsay, Sara and Wynn were out my hair up in the play loft. Around ten that evening Sara came into my office, "You about done for the night? I want to spend some time with you."

I was a bit surprised as she would normally spend time with Lindsay on Friday nights, "Yeah, I can wrap up. Not going to play with Lindsay tonight?"

Sara laughed, "We wore her out on the fuck machine! I'll be waiting...but don't keep me waiting too long."

After Sara left, I noted my progress on the project and shut down for the evening. I made my way to the main suite not quite sure what to expect when I walked in. Upon opening the door I noticed only the overhead fan light was on and at the lowest setting while the fan itself was on the 'turboprop' setting. I glanced over to the bed and saw a four-point restraint system setup. On the bench at the foot of the bed sat Sara in a black military style long-sleeve bodysuit and sheer black pantyhose with ankle boots. She was holding a prostate massager in one hand and a blindfold in the other. She handed me the blindfold and then told me to strip, remove my device and get on the bed, laying on my back. An hour later, Sara had done a masterful job of milking my prostate and eventually got me to cum very intensely in her mouth.

The next morning after breakfast I had returned to my office to continue and hopefully wrap up the project I had started the previous day but had been unable to complete due to all the interruptions. A little later Martina had left herself in. Her and Wynn came into the studio/library to move the tables and started getting the space prepped. The doorbell chimed and I heard Sara greeting Kayré and Kacie. Kacie had walked into the studio and I called out to her, "Hey Kacie, can you come here for moment, I want to talk to you?"

Kacie wasn't sure why I was calling her out and walked in, "Yes Ron?"

I asked, "Say, um...what's going on with Linda?"

Kacie asked, "Why? What have you heard and from whom?"

I told her, "Laura made an odd comment about her yesterday in regards to Miss Kitty."

Kacie hesitated and then quickly walked backwards to close the door between the studio and my office then explained in a low voice, "Oh....well....she doesn't want anyone else to know yet...she is retiring."

I laughed, "Your kidding right? Linda retire is about as odd as Laura willing to fly to Tennessee with us for the Cheshire Farms project. Of course the latter has just occurred....dang I swore I just saw a pig go flying by."

Kacie explained, "She is going to retire from day to day operations of the stores. Miss Meyers will be the new store manager at Oro Valley instead of Miss Holstein. Miss Holstein is going to be doing more conventions/festivals and may be more with the vendors like she did earlier this year with Wasp Corsets. She is going to be leaving for San Francisco in a couple weeks for the annual festivals in mid August."

I thanked her, "Thanks, that explains a lot."

Kacie reminded me, "Again, you are not supposed to know about this. Only the Oro Valley store staff and Kayré know. Thirsty Cactus and Superstition Mountain store staff do not know, which includes your wife and Misses McGrawl. She plans on coming out in a couple weeks to tell the management staff at both stores."

I assured her, "Okay, I'll keep quiet. I owe you that much for getting Linda in line so we could wrap up the Thirsty Cactus projects."

Kacie giggled, "Good we're even now!"

I laughed, "Didn't know we were keeping score."

Chapter 4: The McGrawl's Return to The Nest and Big Announcements

Sunday morning Andy and Lindsay returned to the Sagebrush house with Bambi and The Acme Truck. Bambi came into my office, "Hey Ron, I understand there is some items that need to be moved before we can move the McGrawl's back in?"

I told her, "Yeah sort of. Anyway follow me into the studio. So, one of these tables is going to into the shop. The Chaise Lounge you brought with you is going to go in that space, plus there is another up in the FROG which will need to be brought into to here as well. Wynn can assist you with those. The desk is going in the office; over in the corner between the door and widow."

Bambi replied, "Okay. So what about the Cowboy bedroom set?"

I explained, "That will go in the garage below the FROG, until I can get Dundee to

finish the FROG.”

Bambi told me, “That makes sense, I think. Was there anything else?”

I was about to tell her 'no' when I recalled I had not heard anything about Bunny, “Yeah, what's going on with Bunny?”

Bambi laughed, “The baby is taking her sweet time. She is due any day now. Once she does have her baby we will let you know.” Wynn came into the studio and helped Bambi move the table into the shop. They came back later with the chaise lounge The McGrawl's had been storing in their garage. After they had that one in place they moved the other from the FROG into the studio. After they had setup the chaises they unloaded the bedroom set into the garage next to Sara's Road Runner.

Lindsay came into the studio and saw the chaises setup, “Nice, they fit well in here. Kayré and Kacie will be by a little later and we will do our weekly status meeting. Well, I need to go unpack my shot glass collection.”

A little later Andy came in with a couple boxes and set them on the floor near the empty shelves in my office by his desk, “My collection. Still need to bring my computer over, will do that later.”

I asked, “Do you two plan on staying the night here or wait until later?”

Andy replied, “We've already brought over all our clothes so I guess we've already 'moved back in'.”

I told him, “Well in that case welcome home!” The door bell chimed and since I wasn't sure where Wynn was I headed over and answer the door to find Kayré and Kacie, “Ah, Lindsay did warn me you two were coming.”

Kayré laughed, “Well, get used to it we'll be here on Saturday's for Yoga and Sunday's for our weekly meeting.”

Kacie added, “Though those meetings we will usually do in the mid-morning. We are only doing today's later because of Lindsay's move. Can I talk to you in your office?” I told her we could and went into my office. After she closed the doors she explained, “So Miss Holstein should be in contact with you tomorrow. She wants to make her big announcement on Friday. Since the bulk of the people she works with are out here, she'd like to hold a gathering here...”

I asked, “Define 'here'?”

Kacie laughed nervously, “Your house. She wants to have the management team

from The Superstition Mountain store here along with Kayré and I plus Sara and Lindsay."

I told her, "Okay, I mean sure we can do that. Not sure what we will do for food, may be have Vinnie's cater?"

Kacie advised me, "That is something you can work out with her. Again, this is between the two of us as Sara and Lindsay do not know. Anyway I have a meeting to direct."

Surprisingly on Monday Linda did contact me, "Did my daughter talk to you about my retirement announcement party on Friday?"

I told her, "Well Kacie did. She mentioned something about you wanting to have The Superstition Mountain and the Thirsty Cactus management staff here."

Linda told me, "That is the plan. I plan on doing this around noon on Friday. What can we do about food?"

I explained, "We can have Vinnie's cater, just give me a head count and I'll have Peaches get everything setup."

Linda confirmed, "That works so for my staff and myself it would be eight. Can you send me driving directions?" I told her I could. "Great see you on Friday...oh and Dundee is bringing me up, he mentioned you had something you needed him to work on."

I replied, "Yes, I do actually. Okay then see you Friday." After I had wrapped up with her I paged Wynn to my office. She came in a short time later and I filled her in on what was going on, "So this Friday afternoon, Miss Holstein is going to be hosting her own retirement party here. She is going to have the management staff from the Superstition Mountain and Thirsty Cactus stores here. Don't mention this to Lindsay or Sara as they do not know yet."

Wynn was shocked, "She is retiring?!"

I explained what Kacie had told me, "At least from day to day running the stores. I think she is still going to be involved with vendors like with Wasp Corsets plus conventions and festivals. I know she is going to heading back to San Francisco soon for the annual events out there. Anyway, we are going to have Vinnie's cater the event. Also, Dundee is going to bring her up and will be able to give me a quote on doing the FROG."

Wynn laughed, "Never a dull moment!"

After Wynn left I called over to Vinnie's and talked to Peaches, "Hey we are going to be hosting an event at the Lot 8 house on Friday around noon, need enough food for about a dozen people." Peaches told me she'd get everything taken care of including having Drew deliver. After lunch I called Leslie, "Sorry for the delay had some other business I had to attend to this morning. So in regards to us coming out we are good. I think we will fly in on Sunday and leave that following Sunday. I am going to have Marc charter us a flight to and from. Just to make you are aware, Wynn will be joining us and believe it or not my sister and her assistant."

Leslie was trying to recall, "Which one was her assistant?"

I explained, "That would be Sophie, the one with the purple hair and the mixed Scottish/Boston accent."

Leslie laughed, "Oh her! The grand kids are going to love her hair and her accent. There are only four bedrooms in the barn though."

I told her, "That is fine. Sophie and Wynn usually bunk together."

Leslie didn't seem phased about this and advised me, "That works. Let me know when y'all are suppose to be coming in."

I advised her, "I believe we are going to be renting a couple cars, so we will need directions to your farm. I'll be in contact with you later in the week, need to make arrangements through Marc for the air travel and ground transportation." After dinner Lindsay and Sara headed back to the play loft to unwind for the night. I gave Marc a call, "Evening Marc. So, we are going to need a flight from either Deer Valley or Scottsdale to Nashville. Also we are going to need two cars since there will be seven of us. We plan on leaving here the last Sunday in August, which would be the 26th and returning may be the following Sunday or Tuesday."

Marc told me, "Let me see what I can do, going to take me a couple days since this isn't local and were are further out time wise."

Thursday morning Dundee called, "Hey Ron. So I am hoping Linda did mention to you we would be coming out tomorrow."

I told him, "Yes, for her 'retirement' party and you are going to be able to give me a quote for finishing the FROG."

Dundee confirmed, "Yes, that is the plan. Expect us up around 11:30ish."

That evening Lindsay and Sara returned. Sara asked, "Do you know what Linda is doing tomorrow?"

I was not sure what she knew, "In regards to what?"

Lindsay added, "She wants to meet the Management Staff from Thirsty Cactus and Superstition Mountain stores here for a 'party'?" I confirmed that I knew about it.

Sara asked, "Do you know what this party is for?"

I bluffed, "All I know is she wants y'all here and we are having Vinnie's cater. Dundee is bringing her up from Tucson. Which is great since he will finally be able to get me a quote on completing the FROG or The High Infidelity Suite 3.0."

Sara knew I knew more but was not obligated to tell her, "Okay then....we shall see then."

Friday morning around eight Linda called, "Dundee and I are on our way up." A little after eleven they arrived. Linda assisted Wynn in getting things setup in the kitchen and Great Room while Dundee and I headed out to the FROG.

As we walked over Dundee commented, "Oh, so this garage is already connected to the house." We came into the foyer of the FROG where there was a door to the garage and stairs leading up to the FROG, "Also has direct access, this makes things easier. Let's take a look upstairs and see what we are working with."

We headed up the stairs and entered the FROG. I told him, "At this point, just using it for storage. I can move most of this down into the garage below."

Dundee looked around, "Okay, you've got a decent size area here. What do you want to do?"

I explained, "Pretty much like we did at the Fairy Duster house with that suite you converted from the garage. But, on a smaller scale. I have a queen bed with a couple nightstands I plan on putting up here. Will need a small bathroom too; toilet, single vanity and shower."

Dundee commented, "That is going to take some time as we will need to run new plumbing and sewer lines. Electrical is good though and you have a split system HVAC in here already."

I reminded him, "You have until December."

Dundee laughed, "Yeah, we should have it done well before then, unless The City of Scottsdale is slow getting us permits. Okay, let me take some measurements and photos."

We headed back to the main house and found Kayré and Kacie had arrived. Shortly before noon the guard house called informing us JoJo was here to see us. A few minutes later the door bell chimed and Wynn opened the door, "Welcome. Come on in. Food should be arriving shortly." Jojo, Sadie and Claudia walked in and took a seat in The Great Room.

Linda asked, "What's the word on the food?"

I told her, "Waiting on Drew. He might be lost, with us moving on him twice this past year..." The door bell chimed, "...oh I think he found us!" I headed to the front door and opened it to see Drew with a huge stack of Pizzas and wings. I instructed him, "Come on in and hang a right, you can start putting everything on the island. Wynn...can you assist him?" Wynn came over and took the wings from Drew and set them on the island while Drew set the pizzas nearby.

Drew asked, "Okay, so how are you paying for this?"

Since it was Linda's idea I called out, "Hey Linda!" Linda came over and gave Drew several \$20 bills, enough to cover the order, fees plus a large tip. Drew left and Linda told everyone to grab some food and then find a seat.

After everyone had gotten their food she explained, "So, y'all might be wondering why I called y'all here today. I've been running The Budget Holstein since Kayré was in diapers and then later on both of us along with Olivia took over Corona de las Estrellas after Maria and Hal's deaths. Back then we only had the Oro Valley Budget Holstein. Then about 15-years ago after I got the settlement from El Padre, we expanded the Oro Valley location and opened the North Scottsdale location which we recently relocated across the highway here to the all new Thirsty Cactus. Lastly, we added Gold Canyon a couple years ago. I had plans for a Paradise Valley location, but decided against it....for now. Anyway, the time has come for me to step away, at least from day to day store operations. So effective Monday, Lynette Meyers aka Madam Kat will take over as store manager of the Oro Valley store. In a couple weeks Aubrey will become the operations manager for Oro Valley. Kayré will remain store manager at the Thirsty Cactus location with Lindsay McGrawl continuing as operations manager. At Gold Canyon, Sadie the store manager and Jojo as operations manager. I am still going to be part of the overall operations, more passively. I am going to focus my time on expanding the Budget Holstein brand via conventions and festivals as well as recruiting new and exciting vendors."

Kacie added, "I will still be your point of contact for corporate issues as I have been for the past year."

Everyone congratulated Linda. She wrapped up, "I will still stop by the stores

from time to time whenever I am in the neighborhood. Anyway, there is plenty of food left and I am paying you for the entire day so enjoy!" Linda walked over to me and asked, "Can I see you in your office." I told her 'yes'. She called out, "Jojo, Lindsay and Kacie come with me."

Since the five of us would be a bit much in the office I suggested to Linda, "Why don't we just use the studio, office would be a bit tight for the five of us."

Linda laughed, "Okay that works." The five of us walked into the studio. Linda informed me, "This really doesn't pertain to you, but I'll have you here as a 'witness'. She turned her attention to her senior staff, "Anyway since you three are operations managers I did want to make sure you area aware Aubrey is going to take over as operations manager at Oro Valley when she returns now that Madam Kat..."

I corrected her, "...Miss Kitty"

Linda sighed, "Okay fine...*Miss Kitty*...happy now Ron?" She was having a hard time containing herself. I nodded 'yes'. She continued while laughing, "Now that *Miss Kitty* is taking on the role as store manager." She turned to me and joked, "I knew there was a reason I wanted you here."

I told her, "Yeah sure, but I am just a 'witness'."

Linda continued, "We'll be stopping at The Superstition Mountain store on our way back Monday. Think of it as a surprise inspection."

I laughed, "Ain't much of a surprise if you are telling them..."

Linda countered, "It still would be a surprise as they won't know when I would show up!"

I added, "Actually, that's nothing out of the ordinary."

Kacie and Jojo really weren't sure what was going on, Lindsay on the other hand knew and added "or *if* she shows up!"

Linda complained, "Hey...that's not true...okay may be it is."

Kacie understood what was happening and joined in, "Oh it is very true!"

Linda pretended to be shocked, "Kacie O'Neil! You are so....correct." Since Jojo was very confused as to what was happening Linda explained, "Ron and I have known each other for long time...too long."

I explained, "Yeah, way back when you still had color in your hair and Martina and I were still married. However, it was because of Linda that Sara and I met The McGrawl's. Also Linda sometimes doesn't have a concept of time..."

Linda hadn't realized she was responsible for bring us together, "Really, I got you and The McGrawl's together when was this?"

I told her, "When you server blew up...the first time. Sara and I were on our way back from ACME, back when Gary was still in Vegas. You had us stay at The Holiday Inn Express. Sara and I were having a continental breakfast in the lobby the next morning as were The McGrawl's. One thing led to another and we quickly learned we had 'common interests'."

Lindsay giggled, "Oh yeah, I remember that morning Sara and I really surprised you."

I added, "I think Andy was as well. At least he helped me rebuild Linda's server."

Linda recalled, "Wow, that was a long time ago. Completely forgotten Gary was in Vegas, were Bunny and him married then?"

I told her, "No, him and Bunny didn't get married until they came and built out here. In fact Sara and I were married the same time...you were there and provided the dresses for the brides and their bride slaves. Martina divorced me and then married Marc. Now Gary and Bunny are expecting their first child any day now. So when are you heading back to San Francisco?"

Linda told me, "If I can get everything wrapped with Madam...I mean Miss Kitty next week, then the following week. Anyway, I think Dundee is getting bored so we should be going."

Wynn came into the studio, "Gary on the house line."

I went into my office and picked up the house line, "What's up Gary?"

He informed me, "We have a new addition to the Zinfandel family....Bernice or Bernie Zinfandel. Bunny went into labor late last night and Bernie was born this morning. All healthy and Bunny is doing well too. She should be back home in a couple days."

I told him, "Congratulations! So you're a father now! I take it Claudette is happy?"

Gary laughed, "Oh she is over the moon. Just hope she doesn't expect us to have anymore. She is going to be staying with us for a while. Hopefully, she will leave

before Bernie goes to college. Anyway, need to get going just wanted to let y'all know."

I returned to the study and found Linda still in there chatting with Wynn and Lindsay. I told them, "Bunny had her girl early this morning. Bernice Zinfandel. Mom and baby are doing well."

Chapter 5: Laura's Extended Vacation and The High Infidelity Suite 3.0

Later in the week Marc called me, "Hey Ron. I am going to send you some flight options. Look them over and figure out which one works for y'all."

I opened my email, "Ah okay. Yes, I'll look them over. How soon do you need to know since Laura and Sophie won't be up this way for a couple weeks still?"

Marc told me, "The sooner the better so we can get these reserved."

I told him, "Okay I'll talk to Laura."

—

A week and half before we were to depart Laura and Sophie arrived. Wynn took Laura's bags to the southern suite while Sophie put her own bags in Wynn's suite. Laura asked, "Anyone else here right now besides you and Wynn?"

I explained, "No. Sara and The McGrawl's are at work. They will be back later this evening."

Laura replied, "Ah okay. Have you ordered the equipment yet for The Cheshire Farm's job?"

I told her, "Yes, it was ordered last week. Having it dropped shipped to the farm per their request. Since they don't have room to store the equipment at the cafe."

Laura asked, "The farm as in the farm house where we are staying?" I told her 'yes', "Okay, that makes things easier. I can get the equipment configured before we install, assuming we would have time."

I advised her, "We haven't specified a day of the week with them yet for us to do the actual install."

Laura replied, "Good. Oh, by the way, I think next Monday or Tuesday Kacie is going to give me a crash course in Square so I can help out Charlotte. She mentioned you have a spare terminal..."

Sophie came back with Wynn and asked Laura, "Is it okay if we play a while?"

Laura laughed, "You don't need to ask *my* permission we are on vacation. Though, she's Ron's employee."

I had never really heard anyone refer to Wynn as 'my employee', "That's a bit of formal way of putting it. She is more like family. Anyway I don't have any issues as long as she has finished her chores. Now back to your question, yes I do have spare terminal. It is setup as part of the lab in my shop. I think it has the Vinnie's image on it at the moment. Let's go take a look."

Sophie and Wynn headed up to the loft. Meanwhile, I led Laura to my office and then to my shop. She was not aware of the 'secret door', "Neat you have a secret door into your shop!"

I explained, "Wasn't something I had planned, just happen that Dundee designed it this way to keep all the shelves flush on this wall. Anyway, since the terminal is wireless you two can work on it in the studio when that time comes. So curious, how long would it take for you to configure their network equipment?"

Laura explained, "I'll start working on their configs next week. Really won't take long as fairly simple given they are using Square. It would take Sophie and I may be a couple hours to unbox, power up, copy and save the configs, then re box everything. The only thing that would be time consuming would be the iPad's."

I told her, "Not really, just would need to wait on those until we are connected. Once the MAC addresses are added into their Square profile, the image will automatically be pushed. Just a matter of installing the app. Wynn can get that done while you and Sophie are doing your thing. The only wiring we need to do is for a couple access points." We discussed some more details of the install and wanted to focus her on getting to the install. I told her, "So Marc sent me some flight info. Looks like we can do a charter non-stop from Scottsdale to Nashville. The charter uses Learjet, is this alright?"

Laura laughed, "Really, I don't care as long as it is not a canoe with wings or a commercial airliner with screaming kids and/or drunk executives I am fine. When are we leaving?"

I reviewed the details Marc had sent me, "Looks like late that Sunday morning. Should get into Nashville mid-afternoon. We will rent a couple cars and should be at The Cheshire's in time for dinner. That Monday, we can do inventory and start configuring everything. Hopefully, you will be able to work with Charlotte that day in getting her square image setup. Do the install on Tuesday and that gives us about a week thereafter to do whatever what we want. We are going to come

back the Tuesday after Labor Day, thinking early afternoon.”

Laura reminded me, “I am not due back at The Ritz until that Friday. Think Sophie and I will leave on Thursday. Don't want to be back sooner as I don't want to be on call.”

I told her, “That is fine. The McGrawl's and Sara are the ones who need to be back. Kacie has to cover for Lindsay and Sara while they are gone and that means she has to be in the store. Okay, I am going to call Marc and confirm the flights and ground transportation with him. Why don't you go join Sophie and Wynn up in the loft.”

Laura replied, “Sounds like a good idea. Thanks for letting us stay here for a couple weeks, really needed to get away from everything.”

After she left my office, I called Marc, “Okay, so Laura and I had a chance to chat. We will do the mid-morning flight on Sunday and come back the Tuesday afternoon after Labor Day. We are going to need to rent two cars from the Nashville airport for that time frame. Do one in my name and the other in Wynn's. We need one of the cars to be an SUV so we can haul the equipment from The Farm to their Cafe.”

Marc confirmed, “That works, I'll get this submitted and send you an invoice.”

Next I called Leslie, “Howdy Leslie. So I have finalized travel plans. We should be arriving in Nashville that Sunday. Likely late afternoon and then we will drive out to the farm. We are staying until the Tuesday after Labor Day. Let Charlotte and Dave know we are going to be doing pre-staging and configuration that Monday. Ideally, we would like to have Charlotte work with Laura in getting her square image setup. Also, the equipment is being dropped shipped to the farm not sure when, once Wynn gets a confirmation from Road Runner Freight, we will let you know.”

Leslie asked, “Why not just to the cafe.”

I explained, “Because Charlotte told me they did not have room. Plus we want to test and get everything pre-configured before we do the install.”

Leslie replied, “Okay, sounds good. We can have it stored in one of the out buildings. So, unless anything changes on either our ends we will see you that Sunday. Give us a call when you get into Nashville, just so we can make sure some is here when you arrive. Though being a Sunday evening we should be here anyway.”

I assured her I would. I worked on and completed a triage project and after

sending the client an invoice I headed to the kitchen to see what was going on. I came into the kitchen to find Laura and Sophie helping Wynn. A short while later Sara and Lindsay returned. Sara walked in and saw Sophie and totally ignoring Laura she exclaimed, "Sophie so nice to see you!"

Laura laughed, "How about me?"

Lindsay laughed, "How rude of Sara! Good to see you Laura or is it Abby?"

Laura told her, "Thanks. Either is fine. I go by Abby at work only because there is another Laura somewhere in the IT Department. I think she in Vegas at The Cosmo. So is everyone back?"

I told her, "No, we are waiting on Andy."

Lindsay explained, "He'll be a little late he had to go out to Fountain Hills."

Andy came in a short time later, "Sorry I am late. Had to pickup some items from Fountain Hills."

During dinner I explained, "So Abby is going to be here a while. We will leave on Sunday the 26th mid-morning, likely after The Budget Holstein conference call. We are departing from Scottsdale and should arrive in Nashville in the late afternoon. We will be renting a couple cars and then drive down from the Nashville Airport to The Cheshire Farm. Oh Wynn before I forget, once get shipping confirmation from Road Runner Freight, forward that info to Leslie and/or Charlotte so they know when to expect the equipment. We will be coming back the Tuesday after Labor Day, sometime in the late afternoon. Abby will be leaving that Thursday."

Sara confirmed, "Okay, so we need to let Martina know that Saturday that she can't do the yoga session here."

I advised her, "Not really, you can let her know we aren't going to be here. But she can still use the studio as she has a house key. Kayré and Kacie along with Maya and Peaches would still be attending."

Wynn added, "I think Bunny and Bambi would be too. Gary gets to spend time with his daughter while they are gone."

Laura was not aware of the Yoga sessions, "What yoga sessions?"

Wynn told her, "On Saturday morning Martina leads a yoga session in the studio. You and Sophie are welcome to join."

Laura laughed, "It has been years since I've done yoga. Sophie does on a semi-regular basis."

The house line rang and Wynn informed me, "Dundee holding for you."

I went into my office and picked up the house line, "Evening Dundee. What news do you have to share which requires interrupting our dinner?"

Dundee wasn't sure if I was being serious, "Oh sorry....just letting you know your permits were approved today and we can start work tomorrow."

I told him, "No worries. Okay, that's good. What's your time line on this?"

Dundee explained, "In theory if we don't find anything out of the ordinary and no scheduling issues with trades, I would hope the end of next week. I'll forward you the approved plans, as we did have to make a couple minor tweaks for code compliance."

I wrapped up with Dundee and returned to dinner, "So Dundee has informed me the permits for the High Infidelity Suite 3.0 have been approved and will start work on that tomorrow."

Laura laughed, "The what?!"

Wynn laughed and explained, "Lindsay and Sara's play room or as Ron is calling it the High Infidelity Suite."

I gave a brief history, "So back at The Ashler Hills aka The Acme House the Copper Queen suite became the first High Infidelity Suite after Lindsay and Sara had a particular encounter in there which involved some HiFi equipment. The name is taken from an REO Speedwagon album of the same title. It will also double as a private guest suite for when mother and Blanche come out. The Quail Suite at the Fairy Duster house was going to be used for that purpose, but then Kayré and Kacie ended up moving into it until we came here."

After dinner Sophie helped Wynn with the dishes while Sara, Lindsay and Laura headed up to the play loft. Before they left Sophie suggested to Sara for Laura to spend some time on the spanking bench. I had returned to my office and was looking over the job boards and reviewing my open bids when Sophie came into my office, "Do you have a few moments we can talk?"

Chapter 6: Trouble in Marana and The Burgundy Suite

Since I wasn't seeing any jobs currently posted which interested me and had not won any bids yet, "Yes, sure. What's going on?"

Sophie closed the French Doors between the studio and my office, "It is about Laura and Miss Kitty."

One thing I had learned over the years is Sophie knew *everything* that went on with Laura and even Miss Kitty. I also knew Sophie could confide in me, "I see." In a joking manner I asked, "Is there 'trouble in paradise' with the two of them?"

I certainly was not prepared for her answer, "Yes, very much so."

I asked, "Not that it much matter, but curious does she know you are talking to me?"

Sophie laughed, "No she does not. However, she is occupied by your wife and 'her partner' at the moment."

I was a little confused by her statement, "My wife's partner?" I laughed when I realized who she was referring to, "Oh you mean Lindsay...that is an interesting way of putting it. So, what do you want to or can tell me?"

Sophie explained, "Both of them are very frustrated with each other. Each blames the other for their frustrations whilst themselves are actually to blame. Miss Kitty works long hours at Budget Holstein while Laura spends 10-12 hours six days a week at the resort. Laura wanted to get away from not only the resort but from Miss Kitty. I think it will only be worse now that Miss Kitty is the store manager for Budget Holstein. I don't see their relationship continuing much longer at this point. She's talked about leaving the resort as she has made so much money, but even then she wouldn't see much of Miss Kitty given her hours. Plus, she would not know what to do with herself."

I sat there processing all of this and remarked, "Well, this certainly explains why she was so interested in coming along for The Cheshire Farms job. When I had previously talked to her about it when we were in Tennessee, she would do her part remotely. The irony of this is too, she had told me when we wrapped up the Thirsty Cactus mega projects she really wasn't wanting to do these type of jobs anymore because of the resort. But, you say it is the same for Miss Kitty?"

Sophie replied, "Yes. Miss Kitty is enjoying her work at The Budget Holstein. She likes having a 'real' job and is very good at what she does. In the past months she has put more focus on her job as Miss Holstein's *planned* retirement drew nearer and Miss Holstein would promote her to store manager."

Again I was surprised by what Sophie was telling me, "Wait, 'planned' retirement. I was under the impression Linda woke up one morning and decided 'Hey I am going to retire today!'"

Sophie laughed, "May be she did, but that was a few months back. Miss Holstein took Miss Kitty to dinner one night and started discussing her plans to retire. She was impressed with how Miss Kitty was handling the store after the previous manager had left. Anyway, you didn't hear this from me, in fact I better go check up on her."

Sophie left my office and I decided I would just let things play out. The following Saturday morning Martina came over to do her regular Yoga session. Laura and Sophie joined everyone else. After they were done Laura and Kacie came into my office. Kacie asked, "Do you have that test Square Terminal handy?"

I replied, "Yes, it is in the lab. We can set it up in the studio if you like."

Kacie told me, "That would be good. Abby and I will work with it tomorrow once I finish our weekly Budget Holstein meeting."

Later in the day Dundee came into my office, "Hey Ron. Can you come take a look at the framing up in the FROG? Want to make sure everything is as you expected."

I made a note on my current job and headed over to FROG. Upon entering I saw a small open area at the base of the stairs and then saw the framing for a bedroom, on-suite bathroom and modest closet. I asked, "What is this area?"

Dundee explained, "Small sitting area with some shelving. You could have chaise lounge next to the door. We are going to put in window seat here so one can sit admire this view. I figured you really didn't need a huge closet or bathroom."

I had to agree, "True since we won't be having an Alaskan King bed in here. I believe the bedroom set is a queen..."

Dundee confirmed, "Yes, I measured the set and designed the room to accommodate said set. I have plumbing and electrical scheduled for Monday, should take them a couple days. Later in the week I'll have a HVAC contractor come out and install three mini-split systems: sitting room, bedroom and bathroom. Was there anything else you wanted?"

I thought for a moment, "How about a mini-fridge and fans?"

Dundee confirmed, "Yes, fans in the bedroom and a small fan in the sitting area. As far as a mini-fridge..." We walked back out to the sitting area, "Okay, yes. We can put it in the lower part of the shelving and have a finished butcher block counter above. So, once the rough electrical, plumbing and HVAC are done we will be at the mid-point. I'll send you an invoice at that point. From there, I expect

we would be done by next weekend.”

I advised him, “Okay, that should work. We are leaving next Sunday for a week long vacation and mini-job.”

The next morning while the girls were having their meeting in the study, Andy and I had our own...out in Carefree. Of course our meeting consisted of brunch and no specific agenda items. While we were eating Andy commented, “Seems like us moving back in with you guys has done wonders for Lindsay.”

I laughed, “Yeah, guess we have proven my theory that they are inseparable. Speaking of which, their 'space' which will also double as a guest room when my mother and Blanche visit should be done this coming week.”

Andy joked, “Good they can spend the night together on Fridays and I can get some sleep so I am not a zombie when I open Fountain Hills on Saturdays.”

We returned later in the day to find Wynn cleaning in her purple catsuit, “Your back. Sara, Lindsay, Sophie and Kayré are up in the loft. Your sister and Kacie are in the studio working on that Square terminal. Soon as I am done cleaning here, I am heading to the market. Going to do the spicy meatloaf tonight.”

Thursday evening Dundee called my cell, “Hey can you meet me over in the garage.” I told him I'd be there shortly. After pausing my current project and noting where I was in the process, I headed over to the side garage. Dundee upon me entering informed me, “Well, it is done. Time for the grand reveal.”

I told him, “I think Sara and Lindsay should be part of this as it is going to more their space. Let me see if I can I go find them real quick.” I walked back into the main house and found both Sara and Lindsay in the great room with everyone else watching a movie, “Hey Sara and Lindsay, can you come with me please?” They got up and followed me out to the garage and I explained, “So your new 'space' is done...which will also double as a guest suite for my mother and Blanche. Dundee is ready to present his great reveal.”

We went up the stairs to the sitting area which now had the shelves along the northern wall as well as the eastern wall between the window which had a built-in seat underneath. There was also a very colorful chaise lounge next to the door to the main suite. Dundee explained, “So I had this space here and it just wouldn't have made sense to use it for the main suite. So I created this little sitting area where you can chill and read a book on the chaise or in the window while sipping a glass of wine and watch the sunrise.” He pointed to the lower portion of the shelves on the northern wall and revealed a built-in mini wine fridge, “So behind this door is a mini wine fridge. Next to it is storage for wine glasses and more. Then you have a finished butcher block counter top above you can set snack tray,

a wine bucket, etc.”

Lindsay laughed, “Cain't say I ever seen a Burgundy chaise lounge before!”

Sara noticed, “Matches the window seat though.”

Dundee explained, “If you were to have a mishap with the wine, it won't show...as much. Let's head into the main suite.” We walked in and saw the western bedroom set in the room.

Lindsay commented, “Oh, this looks familiar!”

Sara observed, “Fits nicely in here. Not a very big room, but then we don't need that much space.”

I reminded them, “We also have a much smaller footprint to work within compared to that of The Quail Suite at the other house.”

Dundee added, “Plus, wanted to dedicate more space to the bathroom, which is why the closet is not very big.” Dundee showed us a simple 'wall closet' which backed up to the wall of shelving in the sitting room.

We walked in the bathroom and I was really surprised, “Oh wow. Didn't know you were going to do a freestanding tub plus a shower!”

Dundee explained, “Yeah, I did the change the plans a little. My plumbing trade had been wanting to offload this tub; said he had order it for an another client, but they said it was too small for their needs. I figured out if I moved the sink and shrank the closet I could make the bathroom larger to accommodate both.”

Once again Dundee outdid himself, “Every time you've come through beyond what I had ever expected. This is fabulous. Gives Lindsay and Sara some space to themselves for Friday nights and a place for my mother and Blanche to stay when they come up for The Holidays.” I turned my attention to Sara and Lindsay, “You two get to stay up here this Friday. Andy will be grateful.”

Dundee and I headed back down to my office so I could arrange final payments.

Friday morning Wynn worked on getting the Burgundy Suite fully setup for Lindsay and Sara. She put fresh sheets on the bed and added plenty of towels in the bathroom. She added several scented candles on the ledge near the tub and window. Over in the sitting room she put a couple bottles of wine and several bottles of water in the fridge; plus a couple set of wine glasses in the cabinet next to the fridge. She also added a small selection of toys, including a couple bed restraint systems in the bedroom closet. Lindsay had taken her car Friday

morning as she was going to be getting off work earlier than Sara having worked late a couple nights prior with one of her clients. Lindsay wanted to get things setup including getting herself ready for Sara later. She knew after dinner Sara would want to have a soak in her tub before she started playing. Lindsay went into her room and found her favorite gag, she then headed up the play loft over the to closet. She looked around and found a wireless egg vibrator along with a fiddle and padlock (which she made sure had the correct key). She took those items along with her 'angel' outfit to the Burgundy suite.

Sara called Wynn about an hour before she was supposed to be coming home to inform her she was going to be a little later tonight as one of Miss Bordeaux's daughters had stopped in. Wynn told her she keep her food warm for her. Lindsay came into the kitchen shortly before dinner and upon seeing her Wynn told her, "Hey Lindsay. Sara is working a little later tonight. You can either eat now or wait for her."

Lindsay thought for a bit, "I'll go ahead and eat now. That way I can take a soak in that new tub and get myself 'prepared' for her before we play tonight."

Wynn laughed, "Getting yourself into trouble again? Oh well, Sara will eventually find you. Anyway get washed up and I'll dish you out your dinner."

Lindsay went to the hall bathroom to get washed up for dinner. Upon returning she asked Wynn, "Is there is a wine bucket up in the new suite?"

Wynn thought for a moment, "Um...no. Because there is not ice up there. I will fill one up shortly and you can take it up with you. It will only last a couple hours so best I wait to prepare it until you are ready. Now, sit and enjoy your dinner. Ron and I will join you shortly."

After Lindsay was done with her dinner, Wynn filled up a wine bucket with ice and handed it to Lindsay and advised her, "I'll be up there later tonight with some ice cream. I will also collect your wine glasses and the bucket then."

Lindsay headed up to Burgundy suite and placed the ice bucket on the counter above the wine fridge. She looked at the wines Wynn had put in the fridge and decided on a Pinot Noir. She opened the cabinet removed two glasses, a corkscrew and stopper. After opening the bottle, she poured herself a glass then placed the bottle with stopper in the bucket. She went into the bathroom and started the tub before returning to the sitting room to consume her glass of wine. She didn't want to leave the tub unattended too long, so she took her glass into the bathroom. The tub was about halfway filled, Lindsay found some bubble bath and poured a cap full into the tub. She undressed and removed her belt. She wasn't too sure what to with her clothes but then she noticed a small bamboo hamper between the tub and vanity. She placed her clothes in the hamper and

got into the tub. The hot water felt so good and with the wine she was starting to fall asleep. Sara arriving home in her Road Runner woke up Lindsay. Lindsay figured she have about an hour before Sara would be up. She quickly got out of the tub and dried herself off; then went into the bedroom and sat on the bed to put on her ivory stockings and then the high heel sandals. Next was her ivory overbust corset which she had worn many of times that she could lace herself into. She took the vibrating egg and felt her pussy and discovered she was already getting wet thus had no problem inserting the egg into her pussy. Next she put on her belt which included the anal plug which she applied a generous amount of lube before inserting into her ass. Once she had her belt locked she placed the keys for her belt, the high security ankle cuffs and the fiddle padlock in a drawer in the far end bedside table. Finally to complete her outfit she put on a long white skirt. She looked at herself in the free-standing mirror (which had been the original High Infidelity Suite at the Ashler Hills house) before going to the sitting room with her glass of wine.

Sara came into the kitchen and asked, "Where is everyone?"

Wynn told her, "Abby and Sophie went out for the evening. Ron is in his office and Lindsay is getting ready for you up in the new suite. I have your dinner ready."

Sara laughed, "Oh boy, this should be interesting! Okay let me go wash and I'll have my dinner." After Sara finished her dinner she took a soak in her tub and was trying to figure out which outfit she wanted to wear tonight for her 'date' with Lindsay. Meanwhile back in the Burgundy Suite, Lindsay had finished her glass of wine. She had tested earlier getting herself into the fiddle and had determined the counter above the cabinet was a good enough height for her to be able to put the locking pin in place. She sat down on the chaise and attached the high security cuffs to her ankles. While she could walk, it would be very difficult between the high heeled sandals and the cuffs to go very far, especially down the stairs. She put on her combo trainer gag/blindfold, this time not bothering to use the locks since with the fiddle on she wouldn't be able to remove it anyway. She felt around and found the remote for the vibrator and went through the various patterns until she found a progressive one that went from high to low which she felt would 'torment' her. She stood and felt her way over the doorway into the bedroom and then tossed the remote somewhere into the bedroom. She made her way back to the chaise and picked up the fiddle. A couple minutes later she had the fiddle locked on and laid down on the chaise waiting for Sara.

Sara got out of her tub and after drying off she looked at her closet and decided she would do her black widow corset along with black stockings and her long skirt and ankle boots. She quickly changed into her outfit and was coming into kitchen when she saw Andy eating dinner. He saw her outfit and commented, "Oh Lindsay is going to love that! You two have fun tonight, so I can sleep!"

Sara laughed and told Andy, "I'll make sure she stays with me tonight, even if it means I have to tie her to the bed....which I am likely going to do anyway!"

Before she headed to the suite Wynn told her, "Sara, I'll be around in about an hour to bring y'all some ice cream then will leave you two alone for the rest of the night."

Sara replied, "Sounds good." She made her way to the stairs, not quite sure what she was expecting to find. As she came up the stairs she could hear a vibrator slowing down, then stopping then starting up again at full speed. Sara arrived at the top of the stairs and as she rounded the corner she saw Lindsay, "Oh my, the things you will do for me!" She noticed this time around there was a regular padlock on the fiddle instead of a timer lock. She then noticed the wine bucket, "Goody! Wine, don't mind if I do!" She poured herself a glass and happened to glance out the window and could see the shadows of the clouds over the mountains as the sun was starting to set, "Wow, what view. Guess I should try out this window seat while I am here." She noticed an open niche below the seat stuffed with several pillows. She grabbed a couple and then perched herself into the window seat, "Hey, this ain't bad! So what do you want to do tonight?" Lindsay just grunted through the gag and Sara laughed, "Yeah, you can't answer me...which is actually a nice thing, you do tend to get very chatty!" Lindsay objected (as best as she could) through the gag. Sara just giggled and finished her first glass of wine. She set the glass on the counter and walked over to Lindsay. Without saying anything she lifted Lindsay's skirt and was surprised to see the high security ankle cuffs, "Oh, so don't need to worry about you running away." She slowly ran her hand up Lindsay's stocking covered legs and again was in for surprise when she felt Lindsay's belt, "Ah, so that's how you are keeping the vibrator inside you." Sara rubbed Lindsay's thigh which caused her to moan very loudly. Sara commented, "Here I am all dressed up and you can't see my outfit. At least you didn't lock your harness gag on this time."

Sara removed the harness gag from Lindsay's head then kissed her deeply. Lindsay let out a scream of frustration, "So close!" She observed Sara, "Oh wow you look so hot tonight!"

Sara laughed, "You do love tormenting yourself. I don't see a lock box in here, where are the keys?"

Lindsay explained, "The keys are in the top drawer of the far end bedside table."

Sara replied, "Okay, I'll go grab them. You stay here!"

Lindsay laughed, "Hadn't planned on going anywhere. Between these cuffs and bloody heels it is nearly impossible for me to walk!"

Sara went into bedroom and found all the keys. She left Lindsay's belt key in the drawer but took the cuff and padlock keys back with her. Upon returning she unlocked the fiddle so Lindsay could remove it on her own. She opted to keep the ankle cuffs on Lindsay so she 'couldn't run away' then commented, "I didn't see the vibrator remote in the drawer, where did you place it?"

Lindsay explained, "I just threw in the bedroom, not sure where it ended up."

Sara told her, "Okay, I'll look and see if I can find it. Meanwhile pour us another glass of wine while I am looking." Sara went into the bedroom, looked under the bed and found the remote. She picked up the remote and started pushing the pattern button. She heard Lindsay let out a yelp when the vibrator sped up inside her. Sara came back into the sitting room and declared, "Found it!"

Lindsay replied, "No shit! Almost dropped my wine glass. May I have the remote." Sara grabbed her glass and perched herself back in the window seat and told Lindsay 'no'. Lindsay was getting frustrated, "Please?"

Sara just giggled, "No. I think I'll let you stew for a bit...."

Wynn was coming up the stairs, "Lindsay! Sara! You two decent? I come with ice cream!"

Sara shut off the vibrator much to the relief of Lindsay and confirmed, "Yes we are come on up!"

Wynn came up the stairs to see Lindsay on the chaise and Sara in the window seat, "You two having fun so far?"

Sara giggled, "I am, not sure about Lindsay over there!"

Wynn set down the tray with the two bowls of ice cream and spoons. Wynn reminded Sara, "You have her all night! Anything you want me to take back down?"

Sara told her, "Yeah, you can take the fiddle and her harness gag. I'll remove her belt and the ankle cuffs later."

Lindsay carefully stood up and walked over to get her ice cream. Even though the egg was off, it was still moving around in her pussy as was the plug in her ass as she walked, "I sure hope so!"

Sara reminded her, "You're the one decided this would be fun. At least you didn't go as crazy as you did the last time at the Acme house."

Wynn picked up the items along with the empty wine bottle and told them, "Okay, I'll leave you two for the night. I'll make one last trip tonight much later to collect the dishes. Enjoy!"

Sara and Lindsay consumed their ice cream and finished their glasses of wine. Sara asked, "Is there more wine?"

Lindsay laughed, "There is....but we've already had two glasses. I'd like to stay awake for a while so we can enjoy our time together."

Sara added, "Well, I wasn't talking about right now. So, you have ankle cuffs on...I wonder what's in the closet? Let's go take a look shall we." Sara walked over to the chaise and helped Lindsay stand. As Lindsay stood the egg and anal plug to move around inside of her, "I need to pee! Then can you get me out this belt?"

Sara laughed, "May be; May be I'll make you earn your release. I'll help you to and from the bathroom so you can go pee. Whilst y'all are in there, I'll take a look in the closet and see what we have."

Lindsay didn't really care either way as just the fact she was getting to spend some alone time with Sara. As they slowly walked into the suite Sara turned the vibrator back on which caused Lindsay to nearly fall, "SARA!" Sara laughed and turned off the vibrator. "Thank you!"

After what seemed like an eternity they finally made it to the bathroom. Sara told her, "You should be able to make your way to the toilet." Lindsay shut the door to the bathroom and slowly shuffled her way to the toilet. Meanwhile Sara took a look inside the closet and pulled out a matching set of high security handcuffs along with a regular set of handcuffs. Sara tossed those on the bed and removed her skirt. Lindsay finished her business in the bathroom and shuffled her way back into the bedroom. Sara told her, "Get on to the bed. You are going to need to earn your release from your belt." Lindsay slowly made her way to the bed and sat down on the edge. Sara directed her, "Come over to the side, then turn around and lay on your stomach." Lindsay did as she was told. Sara grabbed Lindsay's legs, "I am going to nudge you more to the center, use your arms to pull yourself forward." With a little effort between the two of them Sara had Lindsay positioned in the center of the bed. Sara just needed to make one final adjustment, "I am going to turn you to the right." Sara turned Lindsay so her head was facing the headboard, "Perfect. Now put your hands behind your back..." Lindsay did as Sara requested and felt Sara attach the high security handcuffs to her wrists. "Now, curl your legs up." Being Sara had cuffed her wrists behind her back, Lindsay figured she was going to be hogtied. Sure enough Sara took the regular cuffs and attached them to the wrist and ankle cuffs.

Sara look at Lindsay hog-cuffed on the bed and giggled, "Such a marvelous sight!" After removing her ankle boots and thong, Sara hopped up onto the bed and moved Lindsay closer to her awaiting pussy, "You know what to do!" Lindsay started licking Sara's pussy, but not to the satisfaction of Sara, "Wow, you are either rusty or not into this...we need to correct this!" Lindsay was not sure what Sara had meant by 'correct this' and then suddenly the vibrating egg locked into her pussy came to life at full speed. Lindsay let out a yelp and quickly improved her servicing of Sara's pussy. Sara turned off the egg, "Now, that is more like it. You gotta make me cum, if I start loosing my edge..." Lindsay was able to keep Sara on edge and finally brought her to orgasm. Sara nearly passed out which would have been bad for Lindsay, "Wow! Very good. Okay, I let you out of all these cuffs and let you remove your belt."

Sara removed the ankle cuffs, then the wrist cuffs from Lindsay who had gotten a little stiff and needed to stretch out as she stood up, "Oh....been a while since I've been hogtied."

Sara laughed, "You're getting old..." She quickly remembered she was nearly the same age as Lindsay, "...shit we're the same age...oh well. Go ahead and remove your skirt and I'll get the belt off for you." While Lindsay was removing her skirt Sara reached over to the nightstand and retrieved Lindsay's belt key. She walked over to Lindsay and was surprised Lindsay was taller than she was, "How are you so tall...oh you're still in heels and I am not....nevermind." She unlocked the belt and went to remove it, but felt resistance, "What the..." Sara realized Lindsay had an anal plug installed, "Oh geez, so this whole time you've had this plug inserted, besides the egg in your pussy. Well you ought be nice and horny now!" Sara pulled the egg out of Lindsay's pussy and toss it to the corner of the room along with Lindsay's belt. "Do you need to pee again before we start?" Lindsay told her 'yes'. Sara laughed, "Figured as such. While you are doing that I'll grab us some water. At this point if we consume anymore wine, we'd likely wouldn't make it another hour."

Lindsay went into the bathroom while Sara went back to the sitting room and grabbed a couple bottles of water from the mini fridge. Before returning to the bedroom suite, she turned off light in the fan in the sitting room but left the stairway lights on for Wynn. Upon coming back into the bedroom she closed the doors and then set the bottles on the small sofa table by the bathroom. Once Lindsay returned from the bathroom Sara handed her a bottle of water and then told her, "My turn. I'll be back shortly then we can have some fun." As Sara was finishing her business and washing she recalled seeing a couple silk scarves in the closet. She now knew what they would be doing for the rest of the evening. Upon returning from the bathroom Sara went back to the closet and retrieved two midnight blue scarves. She handed one to Lindsay and told her, "This be a good time to remove your skirt and your corset as well. Once you are on the bed put

this over your eyes.”

Lindsay undressed down to her stockings as did Sara who then turned off the bedside light. Both girls put the silk scarves over their eyes and then kissed and fondled each other. Both of them were rather tired and after an hour ended up under the comforter kissing and groping each other until they fell asleep. Wynn had come back up to the Burgundy suite close to eleven to collect the dirty dishes, she noticed the suite was dark and even the light in the bedroom was turned out. She quietly collected the dirty dishes while shutting off the stairway lights and then went back to the kitchen to wash said dishes before retiring for the night. The next morning Lindsay woke to find the sun had risen providing enough light she could find her way to the bathroom. By the time she returned Sara was already awake, “Good morning honey, how did y'all sleep?”

Lindsay commented, “Not too bad. Bed is comfortable, we replaced the mattress and box spring when we moved to the condo, but never used it. What time is it anyway?”

Sara looked over the clock on the bedside table, “A bit after eight.”

Lindsay told her, “Okay, Andy has already gone to work. Let me find my clothes and get dressed. We have yoga this morning still?”

Sara replied, “Yes, yes we do. Suppose I should do the same then head back to the house and change into my yoga clothes.”

Sara and Lindsay retrieved and put back on all their clothes. Lindsay decided it would be easier to put her belt back on than to have to carry it, a choice she would regret when she went down the stairs. Back in their own rooms the girls changed into their yoga outfits: high neck biketard with sheer suntan tights. They headed to the kitchen to grab a light breakfast and waited for Martina along with Maya and Peaches and Kayré and Kacie to arrive.

I was grabbing a fresh bottle of Dr Pepper when I saw Sara and Lindsay come into the kitchen. I asked, “So how did it go in the new suite last night?”

Sara told me, “Very well. It is a nice space.”

Lindsay added, “Very private.”

I replied, “Well that is good. That room was what the Quail Suite at the other house was supposed to be used for, until Kacie and Kayré moved in with us. Oh and Andy appreciated having a quiet night.”

Chapter 7: The Cheshire Farms Job and It is Time For A Change

Sunday morning, the girls had their Budget Holstein status meeting. Marc had arranged for ground transportation to the Scottsdale airport. Shortly after they wrapped up their meeting the airport shuttle arrived. We arrived at the terminal and were taken over to plane in a couple golf carts. Much to Laura's relief the plane was a large Learjet. We boarded and were on our way to Nashville. After we took off I gave a briefing, "We plan on getting in late this afternoon Nashville time. Tomorrow Abby is going to be working with Charlotte with getting her Square image created."

Laura commented, "While we are doing that, Sophie can start copying the configs I already built, after y'all have setup and tested the equipment."

I continued, "Okay, so we will need to do an inventory then unbox the network equipment. There is not much, so it should not take too long. Either Tuesday or Wednesday we will do the actual install, depends on how long it will take Abby and Charlotte to do the Square image. Although, I am thinking Andy, Wynn and I could get the AP's installed the first day if Abby is unavailable to do the rest of the install that day. Once we are done with the install, we have the rest of the week for whatever we want. We leave on Tuesday morning and should get back mid afternoon Scottsdale time."

Once we landed Sophie and Sara went to gather up all the bags while I called Leslie. Wynn and I headed over to the rent-a-car counter to get our rentals. We ended up with a mid-size SUV and modest sedan. After we had all the bags loaded we headed out to the Cheshire's farm house. An hour later we arrived. Charlotte greeted us and told us dinner would be ready in a couple hours. Earlier in the week Wynn had received confirmation from Road Runner Freight the equipment had been delivered. I asked Charlotte, "Did y'all get a shipment here via Road Runner earlier in the week?"

Charlotte confirmed, "Yes, it is sitting in the storage building at the bottom of the hill."

I knew what we would be doing after breakfast tomorrow, "Okay, good to know. We will move it into the barn tomorrow morning. We are going to setup, test and configure everything."

Laura walked over, "Charlotte, you free tomorrow for us to get your Square Image built?"

Charlotte told her, "Yes ma'am, should be fun!"

Laura laughed, "Suppose so." She looked around and was taken in by the surrounding forests and hills, "Sure beautiful and peaceful out here!" She also felt

relaxed for the first time in a long time, perhaps because she didn't have her work phone with her and ironically being away from Miss Kitty. The next morning we formed a brigade to move the equipment from the storage building to the barn. Charlotte came over a short time later. Laura and her spent most of the day working on the Square image. Laura did come back up later once she got Charlotte started to confirm, "So do we have everything we ordered this time?"

Wynn had the project manifest and confirmed, "Yes, we do. Looks like we ended up with an extra iPad or I miss-ordered, one of the three."

Laura explained, "Charlotte is at a point where she can work on the Square Terminal for a while on her own. So, lets get the network equipment unboxed and setup. At least this is a much smaller job than Corona de las Estrellas so there is not a whole lot. I am going to go back down and check on her. Meanwhile Sophie can start pasting in the configurations."

Laura headed back downstairs and checked on Charlotte, "How's it going?"

Charlotte seemed fairly confident, "Very well, this is a lot easier than I thought it would be."

Laura reminder her, "It helps having worked with a template builder already." She stepped outside for a bit to call Miss Kitty, "Sure is nice and peaceful out here. I could almost see myself settling down in a place like this."

Miss Kitty told her, "Linda has always wanted an eastern US store!"

Laura laughed and asked, "You being serious?"

Miss Kitty redirected, "Are you, about settling down out there?"

Laura thought for a moment, "I don't know...I feel so calm and relaxed. I know we've talked about me having a store, but thought that would be somewhere in Arizona. May be out by mother in Tubac, but that area is pricey. Linda has also talked about a Paradise Valley store, but that area is even more expensive."

Miss Kitty asked, "Couldn't you have stay with Ron and Sara?"

Laura explained, "May be, but it is bit a far and it seems his house is already tight with The McGraw's living with them. May be this is a sign..."

Miss Kitty informed her, "Linda just came in why don't you talk to her."

Laura didn't really want to talk to Linda, however Miss Kitty handed off the phone to Linda, "Hey Abigail, how's Nashville?"

Laura informed her, "Well, first it's Abby; second we are not in Nashville, I think someone mentioned the town is Franklin. Does seem nice out here, so much so I might just want to settle down out here."

Linda reminded her, "I've always wanted a store in the eastern part of the country. Nashville metro area might be a good fit for us. If you want to relocate and settle down out there then open a store, we can support you on that."

Laura told her, "Not sure yet, but I can at least explore my options. I believe the client's sister is a Realtor. I will let you know. Can you put Lynette back on the line." Linda handed the phone back to Miss Kitty and asked, "So, if I settle down out here then I guess we are no longer going to be married?"

Miss Kitty asked, "Do you want to stay married?"

Laura bit the bullet and replied, "Not really. In fact, I don't think we should have gotten married. I think we really did it because Mother and Blanche were...we kept saying 'when Arizona'....well I don't know. Anyway, I need to get back in and see how Charlotte is doing as well as Ron and the others." She wrapped up then walked back in and noticed Charlotte seemed to be navigating the Square interface with ease, "Looks like you are coming right along."

Charlotte replied, "Yeah might have this done later today."

Laura decided this would be a good time to ask Charlotte, "Great. Say, I understand your sister-in-law is a Realtor?"

Charlotte wasn't really paying attention to Laura, "What? Oh, Victoria? Yes she is a Realtor why?"

Laura told her, "I haven't said anything to anyone yet other than Miss Holstein and Miss Kitty, but I am thinking about relocating out here. I can open a store and would be looking for somewhere for my assistant and I can live."

Charlotte told her, "I'll talk to her tonight. There are some storefronts in or near the downtown which have residences either above or in the rear."

Laura thanked her, "Great, now I need to go check on your network equipment." She headed back up the stairs and asked, "Everything going okay?"

Sophie commented, "So far, looks like you might have interface error on the switch."

Laura looked at the config versus what she had in notepad, "Oh yeah, that is a

gig interface to the AP's, easy fix."

By the end of the day we had the network equipment configured and Wynn sent Laura a CSV file for the iPad's she could upload into Square. The next morning we loaded everything into the SUV and headed over to the cafe. Andy and Wynn worked on getting the AP's mounted and then running the cable back to the switch. Meanwhile Laura setup the rest of the Square equipment including the two terminals in the kitchen, two up front and one in the gift shop. By mid-day we had the install completed. Laura and Sophie tested everything and then showed Charlotte how the terminals in the kitchen would work as well how to use the app on the iPads. Later in the day Laura and Charlotte were alone in the gift shop. Charlotte told her, "I talked to Victoria last night, she was going to take a look at what listings are open right now. She should be able to meet and show you in a couple days."

Laura told her, "Okay, that works. I don't think we have anything planned after tomorrow." That evening we wrapped up the install and returned to the barn. Before we retired for the evening Laura asked Sophie, "Hey can you come to my room for a bit I want to talk to you."

Sophie came into Laura's room, "So what do you think if we were to settle down out here. I've talked to Linda about the possibility of me opening a store out here as we had discussed about possibly doing in Arizona."

Sophie told her, "I don't really much care either way where we end up. However, I don't want to be involved with your store."

Laura agreed, "Understandable. Nothing is for certain yet. I am meeting with Dave's sister in a couple days to see what my options are. Only Miss Kitty and Miss Holstein know...and Charlotte."

Later that week Laura advised us, "I'll be back later, Charlotte and I need to take care of some things." They took off to meet with Victoria in downtown.

Charlotte introduced Laura, "Victoria this is Laura Merlot, Ron's sister." Laura was about to correct her, but realized she would soon be returning back to the Merlot name when her and Miss Kitty divorced.

Victoria hugged Laura, "Nice to meet you. So, I understand you are looking for a small store front and possibly with a residence above or on the same property. What are your plans?"

Laura told her, "I want to open a smaller boutique version of the stores the Merlot's and McGrawl's run."

Charlotte wasn't sure, "The Budget Holstein?"

Laura replied, "Yes. Miss Holstein and I have discussed this and she is fine with me opening my own mini-store or Boutique style out here. Might call it *The Boutique Holstein*. This has been something I've considered doing for a while. Didn't seem practical in Tucson as that is where their flagship store is located. Had thought about doing a store out in Tubac where my mother lives, but that area is very expensive. Plus it is time for a change. Both Miss Kitty and I agree that we just no longer want to be together. She is the manager now for the Oro Valley Budget Holstein and the resort has been draining the life out me for these past few years. I had not planned on being out here with Ron and his crew to do this job in person as we had first discussed. However, later on when Ron informed me y'all wanted to do this at the end of August, I decided I wanted...more like needed to get away. Mainly from the resort and Miss Kitty. Soon as we landed in Nashville then came into town, I felt so relaxed. I know it is a lot of time and money running your own business, but at the same time I can make my own schedule."

Charlotte agreed, "Dave and I feel the same way. We love running the cafe for breakfast and lunch. The 6:00 AM every morning to prep is a bit hard at times, but the reward is by 2:00 PM we are done for the day and get to go home. When we get home we get to spend time with the kids and have dinner together as family. Spend some more time as a family afterwards doing activities as a family and then they are off to bed a couple hours later."

Laura laughed, "Yeah, I understand. I been working 10-12 hours a day; many times six days a week and even when I have a 'weekend' off I am sometimes on call. So what do you have to show me?"

Victoria told her, "A couple in downtown. One does have a residence above, the other does not. I also have a property a little away from the downtown that is a former restaurant but without a residence."

Charlotte knew what Victoria was talking about, "Oh the old Grossi property?"

Victoria confirmed, "Yes, but I don't think that is really going to suit her needs and then she would need to find somewhere else to live being it does not have residence."

Charlotte agreed, "Yeah, it is a little further from the downtown and I don't think it would work well. You'd be better off in the downtown, you would want the foot traffic. Is Sophia staying with you here?"

Laura told her, "Sophie, yes. She's been my assistant for the last 20+ years. Though I don't think she is very interested in working with me all day long...in

fact she already mentioned something about not wanting to work at my store. Not sure what she can do."

Charlotte suggested, "If she is interested she could come work for us in the cafe and gift shop. Something to consider."

Laura was excited, "Thank you, that helps a lot. Okay, lets look at the store front in downtown."

Victoria told her, "Well the first one is just a block away. It does have a small residence above think around 1000 square feet. The retail space is slightly large and there is a detached garage at the rear of the property."

They walked over to the store. Victoria explains, "There is an entrance to the residence from the rear as well as from within the store front."

Laura looks around the store front, "Well, pretty much a blank slate. Do love the big windows up front, will be great for displays."

Victoria advise her, "There is a small back area that you can use for storage or setup as an office while using the garage for storage. There is a restroom back there as well, plus the stairs access to the residence. Let's take look there." They headed to the back and then Victoria opens a door revealing stairs leading up to the residence. They ascend the stairs which leads to the kitchen of the residence. Victoria tells her, "They just recently remodeled the kitchen and bathroom. My understanding was the couple who had owned this prior decided they were out growing this store front and they were expecting their first child so the residence would've been a bit small for them."

Laura looked around there was small living space, a kitchen with an island with seating. On the other side through a small hall was a single bathroom shared by the two bedrooms. Laura commented, "So one bathroom, unless you count the one in the retail space. Not as nice as I have now, but I don't need all that space I have now. This would work perfect for Sophie and I. So where is the other store front?"

Victoria explained, "Couple blocks away and further away from the center of town. It is larger, but again there is no residence."

Charlotte added, "Also, likely in area that does not have as much foot traffic."

Laura headed outside to deck which had the stairs down to a small yard, "Hmm....okay little yard, not as grand as I have in Marana, but again I really don't need something as grand."

Victoria pointed out, "You do have the deck as well, setup a Bistro tables and chairs. A place to sip your wine in the evenings beside a gas bottle fire pit."

Laura commented, "or Brandy..."

Victoria laughed, "That works too. So, what do you want to do?"

Laura walked over to the garage and took a look inside, "Hmm...single car that could pose an issue...oh wait nevermind I was thinking of needing to fit my car and Miss Kitty's truck in there. It would only be my car, which if I am going to be working here, wouldn't need. Sophie, I suppose could use it to go the Cafe."

Charlotte advised her, "We are only a couple blocks from the cafe, it would be quick walk."

Laura walked around the property some more trying to figure out what she wanted to do or for that matter *what* she was doing. She asked, "How long has this been on the market?"

Victoria told her, "About three months."

Laura told her, "I think I'll take it, but let me talk to Ron and Sophie first and sleep on it."

Victoria understood, "Okay, so you do not want to look at the other one?"

Laura confirmed, "I don't think so. It does not have a residence and I don't need a bigger retail space. I'll give you a call in the morning. What time is it anyway?"

Charlotte told her, "Almost noon."

Laura laughed, "Explains why I am so hungry. Dang it is only 10:00 Arizona time, of course I've would've been at work for 4 or 5 hours already too."

Victoria advised, "There is a small bakery cafe across the street where we can grab a bite."

Laura agreed and the three of them walked over to the cafe. Upon walking in they were greeted by the owner, "Victoria and Charlotte what brings you two here?"

Charlotte explained, "Hey Taylor. Victoria is showing a friend of my aunt the building across the street."

Taylor confirmed, "Oh the Bellamy Building, been sitting vacant for a few months

would love to see someone take it over." Taylor showed them to a table and then asked Laura, "What are your plans?"

Laura explained, "Well I want to expand a business Charlotte's aunt and my sister-in-law have in Arizona. It is a high-end boutique clothing store. Corsets, Dresses, Boots and lots of leather. Though, I'd likely be carrying more denim here."

Taylor was excited, "We need something like this over here. More foot traffic for us and the other shops on the block."

Victoria told Taylor, "She's still looking, but seems to like what she saw there."

Taylor replied, "Good luck in your search and it would be awesome to have you over here if you do decide to do that. Well, let me give you a few minutes to look over the menu."

After lunch Charlotte and Laura returned the farm house. Leslie was on her way back to the cafe when she saw them, "Oh hey there Abby. They all went into Nashville earlier. Think they said be back by dinner time."

Laura replied, "Thanks. That is fine, I need to call back home." Laura headed back to the barn and discovered she was indeed alone. She spent a couple hours on the phone with Miss Kitty discussing her 'adventures' of the day. She asked, "Do you think this is the right direction for us?"

Miss Kitty told her, "You know that answer better than I do. If you want to keep your sanity and our friendship intact, then it is. We've changed and that happens. Our focus, our priorities, our goals have changed. This sounds like a great opportunity for you and I think too it will preserve our friendship and professional relationship too. Have you talked to your mother or Ron about this?"

Laura told her, "No, everyone head up to Nashville so I am by myself right now. I don't want to say anything to mother until I know for sure what I am doing. Hell, Sophie doesn't know...well she knows about us, but she doesn't know fully about my intentions are out here...at least I don't think she does...What are you going to do if we sell the house?"

Miss Kitty told her, "Move in to The Ranch which Miss Holstein is fine with that, gives her a reason to keep the Ranch and keeps Olivia company when Lizzie is away up in Scottsdale during the six months in the spring and summer."

Laura heard us returning and told Miss Kitty, "Sounds like they are coming back, I'll talk to you tomorrow. I still want to 'sleep on it' too." Laura found Sophie and asked her, "Can you come with me up to the loft?"

Sophie followed Laura to the loft and asked, "So how did the search go today?"

Laura replied, "It went well, only looked at one place I really liked what I saw. It has a residence above the retail shop. Not as big or lavish as what we have in Marana, but still nice otherwise."

Sophie reminded her, "We don't need anything large, remember the condo we had in Henderson?"

Laura laughed, "Yeah, I'd say this was a little smaller than that place, but it would only be the two of us anyway. If we do this, would you object to working in The Cheshire's Cafe?"

Sophie replied, "Not at all. You telling me I have a job offer waiting?"

Laura told her, "I suppose so. Anyway, I told Charlotte and Victoria I wanted to talk to you and sleep on it. Also talked to Miss Kitty and she agrees this is good for me. She said she'd move into The Holstein Ranch once we sell the place in Marana. Curious, how much does Ron know?"

Sophie explained, "All he knows is you and Miss Kitty were having troubles and that the resort is slowly killing you. I had chat with him the night we first arrived."

Laura was wondering how she was not aware of this, "How did I not....oh....I was up in their loft being spanked by Sara and Lindsay...which I suppose you arranged...dang you're good! Well, good at least it won't be a total surprise to him when I announce this. More than I can say when I finally tell my mother..."

Sara called out, "Hey you two, dinner is ready over in the man house."

After dinner Sara, Sophie and Lindsay went outside with Leslie to play with the kids. Andy was with Dave in the den leaving Charlotte, Laura and myself in the kitchen. I was helping to clear off the table while Laura assisted Charlotte with the dishes. After I had the table cleared off I told them, "I am going to head outside."

Laura told me, "Um...Ron can we talk?"

I asked her, "Here or elsewhere?"

Laura replied, "Here is fine, Charlotte knows."

Charlotte joked, "Hey now don't you be dragging me into this...no it is all good!"

Laura wasn't sure where to begin. She thought for a moment then asked, "When you and Martina divorced what attorney did you use?"

I wasn't surprised by this question and laughed, "I didn't choose the attorney, it was Martina's doing; some guy Marc knew...oh what the hell was his name?...it was a cat; Panther? Jaguar? Puma? Cougar...oh no that would describe Martina....ah now I remember, 'The Cheetah'. Dang, you two just got married less than a year ago."

Laura sighed, "Yeah. Kind of wish we had not. We really only did it for the sake of Mother and Blanche; and no, I have not talked to mother yet. I will at some point...not sure when though. Anyway, Charlotte and Victoria showed me a property today, I think I am going to purchase."

I was shocked, "What kind of property and where?"

Charlotte explained, "It is in the downtown, couple blocks from our Cafe. The building has retail on the bottom with a large residence on top."

Laura giggled, "Funny, my idea of 'large' is much larger than yours!"

Now I was really curious of what her plans were, "Retail? Somehow, I could never picture you working in a retail environment. Now of course I could never picture Martina working with children and I was proven wrong on that count, so would not be the first time."

Laura explained, "So I've been talking with Miss Holstein over the past couple months about opening a smaller more 'Boutique' style of the Budget Holstein. Had thought about Tubac, but that area is very pricey. Or even perhaps Paradise Valley, but again very expensive area to live in."

I explained, "Yeah, Tubac is an artist and tourist town, much like Sedona. If you work there, you can't afford to live there. Paradise Valley is well...the Beverly Hills of Phoenix. Why out here?"

Laura told me, "I don't know. It's weird, I would have never thought about coming here. But, once we got into Nashville then came down here...it just spoke to me...not sure what it is."

I couldn't help but think about our final night out here when we first came out, "I know what you mean. So, when Sara and I came out couple months back with The McGrawl's we had interesting conversation that final night. The McGrawl's were seriously considering relocating out here. They wanted us to join them, but Sara and I are not really in a position we could. While 90% of the work I do is

remote, I still have on-site service agreements for the three Budget Holstein stores plus both of The ACME locations in Henderson and Phoenix. Then Sara has her premier clients such as the infamous Miss Bordeaux. I think Lindsay has a couple as well. In the end we compromised with them moving back in with us. So what happens with Miss Kitty and Sophie?"

Laura explained, "Once the house in Marana is sold, Miss Kitty would move into The Holstein Ranch. Sophie, would stay here with me....oh Charlotte, I talked to her about working in the Cafe and she is fine with that, if we do end up coming out here."

Charlotte was excited, "That's great we can really use the help."

I asked Laura, "If you were to do this, would you be leasing or purchasing the location?"

Laura explained, "Purchasing. Even before the sale of the Marana house, I have plenty of money. That is the one plus of me working those 60-hour weeks was the overtime added up very quickly....as did the vacation time, which I could never seem to get rid of fast enough. Anyway, don't say anything to anyone else. I still want to 'sleep on it' and make a final decision in the morning."

The next morning during breakfast Laura asked, "Ron, could you 'assist' Sophie and I this morning with some business we have in downtown?" I told her I could. Once Charlotte had the breakfast dishes done she took us into downtown to the storefront Laura was interested in purchasing.

Victoria was waiting for us, "Morning Laura. Ron, nice to see you again." She turned to Sophie, "We have not yet met."

Sophie introduced herself, "Sophie, I am Laura's assistant."

Victoria caught the Boston/Scottish accent, "Interesting accent. Reminds me of Leslie's. So, have you made a decision...I am guessing since we are back here, you are about to."

Laura explained, "Wanted to bring Sophie and Ron to look it over with me and give me their feedback."

Victoria understood, "Gotcha, well the door is unlocked so y'all can go on in."

Charlotte told us, "I'll stay out here and keep Victoria company."

The three of us went inside. The retail space was small, but then she didn't need that much space...at least not right now. We headed up the stairs into the

residence which I was really surprised by how updated it had been, "Wow, this really nice up here."

Laura told us, "Yeah, they redid the kitchen and bathroom along with all the flooring shortly before they put it on the market." We walked down the hall and Laura pointed out, "Sophie this will be your room, mine will be across the hall."

Sophie looked into her room, "This is fine. Don't need much space. So you will not have an office then?"

Laura told her, "Don't really need one as I have the storefront."

I asked, "So what about all your toys?"

Laura advised me, "Yeah, the small stuff we can bring with us, but not the big stuff. Do you have room in your loft for the cross?"

I told her, "I think so. Not sure how we will get it up to Scottsdale, but we will deal with that later."

Laura turned her attention to Sophie, "So what do you think?"

Chapter 8: A New Beginning and Gary's First Client Demonstration

Sophie told her, "It is bigger than you had described. For the two of us starting over it will do just fine."

Laura asked, "How about you Ron?"

I explained, "I am still trying to process what you are doing. But, I support you and understand you need a new beginning. So are you going to do this then?"

Laura paused for a moment, "I...I think so. Why do I suddenly feel so overwhelmed?" She sat down at the top of the stairs trying to make sense of what was going on.

Sophie and I sat on either side of her. I assured her, "You are doing the right thing. It is going to be difficult at first, but it will get easier. I'll help you out as much as I can and you have Sophie too."

Sophie also assured Laura, "I have faith in you, always have and always will. You have never steered me wrong...though when we first met..."

Laura breathed a sigh of relief, "Thanks. I know, there is just so much I would need to get done back in Arizona then out here as well."

I reminded her, "You need to take it one step at a time and right now, the first step is to go outside and let Victoria know of your decision so she can get the wheels turning on her end. We will address the other stuff when we get there."

Laura reached over and hugged me, "Thank you. I am glad you are here to support me. You've always been so supportive of me. You too Sophie! Okay, let's do this." We headed outside and Laura informed Victoria she wanted to go forward with purchasing the property.

Victoria told her, "Great, let's go over to my office and I will call the owner and let them know you want to buy."

Several hours later Laura was under contract and had wired her earnest funds. As we returned to the farm Laura asked, "Since we are selling the house in Marana, can Sophie and I stay with you until we move out here?"

I told her, "That's fine, you can keep the same room you are in now. I am sure Wynn won't mind having Sophie around to help her out. That was the one big thing she missed when Kayré and Kacie moved out."

We arrived back the farm. Before Laura went to call Miss Kitty she asked, "Can you get me the number for The Cheetah?"

I replied, "Yeah, I'll give Marc a call." After she left I called Marc, "Hey, I need the number for The Cheetah..."

Marc nearly had a heart attack, "...What the holy hell Ron!?"

I quickly explained, "...it's for Laura. Her and Miss Kitty are going to split and Laura and Sophie are going to start over in Tennessee."

Marc had recovered, "That certainly be a shock, not as much as had it been you and Sara. Yeah, I'll send you that info. How soon are they looking to divorce?"

I told him, "She has already entered into a purchase contract for a property out in Tennessee. She is going to run a mini version of The Budget Holstein. Her and Miss Kitty have already agreed to sell the property they have in Marana."

Before we headed over to dinner Laura advised me she wanted to make her intentions known to everyone else after dinner. Once we finished dinner Dave and Sophie took the grand kids out and joined them on the trampoline. Laura made her announcement, "I have news that I need to share. Ron and Sophie already know as does The Cheshire Family. This is not easy for me, but all of us involved feel it is the right way to go. Miss Kitty and I are going to divorce. Sophie and I

are going to relocate out here in the next couple months. Earlier today I entered into under contract to purchase a store front and residence in the downtown area. I am going to partner with Miss Holstein to open a smaller version of The Budget Holstein in downtown. Sophie is going to work over at The Cheshire Farms Cafe. I've been looking at change in what I wanted to do for the past couple months. Miss Holstein and I have discussed me opening smaller store, though we had thought somewhere in Arizona. This area never even crossed my mind until we came out here this week."

Everyone in the family was quite shocked and surprised. No one really said anything, nor were they sure if they should. I finally broke the silence by suggesting to Laura, "Perhaps you should explain what has lead up to this major decision."

Laura understood, "Perhaps I should. So as you are all aware Miss Holstein retirement resulted in Miss Kitty becoming the manager of the Oro Valley Budget Holstein. Between her long hours as manager and my insane schedule at the resort, our relationship has suffered. Miss Kitty wanted to prove to Linda she made the right choice, while my 60+ hours a week at the resort were draining the life out of me. Miss Kitty and I both agree this is the best choice to preserve our sanity and our friendship."

Wynn was curious, "I am guessing you are still coming back to us with Arizona?"

Laura confirmed, "Yes. Once I get back Miss Kitty and I will start the petition for divorce. We are also going to put the house in Marana on the market and hopefully have it sold before the divorce is finalized. Miss Kitty will move over to The Holstein Ranch while Sophie and I will stay with y'all until things are completed out here."

Leslie offered, "If you need someone to help you out with you store I am going to have a lot more free time soon as Charlotte's kids are going to be back in school."

Laura replied, "Well, I can use all the help I can get. I will eventually have to find employees, heck I will need to find someone who can help me layout the store and figure out which products I should carry."

Lindsay volunteered, "I can help you with layout. I did the layout for both The Superstition Mountain and Thirsty Cactus stores."

Charlotte added, "Leslie and I can help you figure out which products you should carry. We have a pretty good idea of the fashion pulse out here. It is a little different than Arizona, but overall a lot of what you already carry would sell well here."

Laura was overwhelmed with the amount of support she was getting, "Wow. Thank you. It means a lot for me."

Sara came over and hugged Laura, "Hey you are family and we support each other...even our extended family."

On Tuesday we headed to the Nashville airport to return back to Arizona. Before we departed I called Marc to inform him we were on our way back. He informed me there would be a shuttle waiting for us. When we returned to the house Laura called The Cheetah to start the process. A little while later she came into my office, "You have a free moment?" I let her know I did. She asked, "I am wondering how we can get the cross from the Marana house back to here, plus whatever else Sophie and I want to bring with us? The furniture we are going to sell and then buy all new for the place in Franklin. Figured it would be cheaper than shipping it halfway across the country...."

My office line rang and I saw it was Gary calling from his Deer Valley office. Before I picked up the call I told Laura, "Sometimes I wonder if Gary has ESP!" I picked up the office line, "AZ Outback, Ron."

Gary asked, "Hey, I am wondering if you can do me a favor."

I redirected back, "Depends, can you or more likely Bambi do Laura and Sophie a favor?"

Gary wasn't really paying attention, "Um...I think so. Anyway, I have a prospective client coming in tonight wants to demonstrate their gear: bitchesuits."

I was somewhat familiar with the term from my work in the fetish community but never seen one in person, "Oh...okay....never seen one in person."

Gary continued, "Could Lindsay and Sara model if I have the vendor come to your place?"

I would love to see Laura in a bitchesuit, "Sure. I told you before that you can use the studio once Bernie was born. Maybe we can have Sophie and Laura to model as well. What time should we expect you?"

Gary didn't know Laura and Sophie were in town (or anything else regarding them), "Oh so your sister and her assistant are in town? The vendor should be arriving at my office shortly. I'll give them a tour of the facility then have them follow me over to your place. Say in about couple hours?"

I replied, "Yeah, they will be here for quite sometime, hence the favor. I'll discuss

this in more details with you later."

Gary advised, "Sounds good. I'll call you when we leave the office."

After I wrapped up with Gary I told Laura, "Be right back need to find Wynn."

I headed to the kitchen and found Wynn getting dinner ready upon seeing me, "Dinner will be ready shortly."

I told her, "Okay. Gary's going to be over with a client in a couple hours and going to have Lindsay and Sara model. I know Sophie will want to try out their product, bitchesuits. I am going to try to get Laura to model one as well."

I was not aware Laura had followed me out of my office until she asked, "What are bitchesuits?"

Wynn explained, "Sort like a full coverage catsuit, but made of thick leather making them highly restrictive. Used as a domination tool as it forces you either on to your back or elbows and knees. Your fairly immobile and not getting out of the suit by yourself."

Laura really had no clue, "Um...okay. That sounds like something right up Sophie's alley...in fact I might want to get her one."

I laughed, "Oh so true. I could see Sara putting Lindsay in one.."

Once again I was not aware of my surroundings and heard Sara behind me, "What you could you see me putting Lindsay in?"

Without turning around I told her, "A bitchesuit."

Sara laughed, "Your right, I could do that and then have her under my complete control...which is where she likes to be anyway. What brought this up?"

I explained, "Gary is going to be here in a couple hours with a vendor who specializes in bitchesuits. They will setup in the studio."

Shortly after we finished dinner Gary called to warn me they were on their way. The girls were up in the play loft and Andy was watching TV when the door bell chimed. Wynn answered the door to find Gary with an older lady dressed in all leather. Gary replied, "Evening Wynn! Ron is expecting us."

Wynn told them, "Yes he is. Follow me, you can setup in the studio." Wynn led them to the studio and then came into my office, "Gary has arrived."

I told her, "Great. Go round up everyone else into the studio."

Wynn went to get everyone down from the play loft and I walked into the studio. Gary saw me, "Ah Ron, thanks for letting us use this space. Let me introduce to you Lady M. Lady M, this is Ron Merlot good friend of mine and former neighbor."

I remind him, "Hey, were still neighbors...we're just behind you instead of next to you. Nice to meet you Lady M. So Gary tells me you make bitchesuits."

Lady M spoke in a Texas accent that was almost as thick as Maya's, "Yes I do. Gary tells me you have a couple willing models?"

I laughed, "Yes I do. I also one that might not be so willing; my sister. They all should be down here shortly." A short time passed and everyone was in the studio. "Okay. Sophie and Lindsay come on down you're the next models for Lady M!"

Lady M told them, "You are going to need to strip down...." She laughed and added, "and likely a shower when we are done, between the talcum powder and how much you will be sweating." She then asked, "They will need someone to help them in and eventually out of the suit."

I turned the fans up in the studio to hurricane mode as I told her, "Yes, they will. Let me turn up the fan in here too. Sara, help Lindsay and Laura you can help Sophie...though I really would love to see you in one..."

Laura laughed, "I am sure you would, your way of getting back at me!"

I played along with her, "Yeah, for your little indiscretions with my ex-wife...anyway I will let Lady M get setup with her demonstration. Gary can I talk to you out on the Grand Lawn?" Lady M went on with setting up her demonstration while Gary and I stepped outside, "So as I mentioned to you earlier, Laura and Sophie could use your assistance....well actually Bambi and The ACME Truck."

Gary understood, "I suppose we can, what's going on with them."

I explained, "So, Laura and Miss Kitty are divorcing. Laura and Sophie are going to relocate to Tennessee. Laura is working with Linda on opening a smaller version of The Budget Holstein out there. She's already entered into a contract to purchase a store front with residence in downtown Franklin. Sophie is going to be working at The Cheshire Farms Cafe. Anyway, Laura and Miss Kitty are selling the house in Marana. Her and Sophie have some stuff they want to bring with them. Also, in her loft Laura has a Saint Andrews Cross she wants to give to me."

Gary was aware of the toy, "Oh wow that was one of my first demo products. Bought it on consignment from a mistress out in Sparks. I remember when Laura bought that from my old Vegas location after she bought the condo in Henderson. So are Laura and Sophia staying with you in the meantime?" I confirmed, "Okay, so then we need to go to their place in Tucson then?"

I advised him, "She is in Marana, north and west of Tucson. Dove Mountain area by The Ritz to be more exact"

Gary knew the area, "Oh okay, so she's near the Tangerine Highway. We've ridden down there a few times."

I told him, "I'll discuss this with Laura and Sophie later and let you know. Let's head back inside."

We came back in to find both Lindsay and Sophie were in bitchesuits and much to my surprise so was Laura. I retrieved my camera from the armorer and begun to take pictures. Lady M came over and asked, "So what do you think?"

Gary laughed, "I don't think I could get Bunny into one of those now...may be in a few months. Looks like Lindsay and Sophie are enjoying themselves. Not too sure about your sister."

I was still shocked, "Yeah, how?"

Lady M laughed pointed to Wynn, "Your housekeeper..."

Gary informed Lady M, "Well I am impressed. I would be honored to add these to the ACME BDSM product line. Send the product specs to Lulu and she will add the product to our site. Ron can send her a couple pictures of the product in use."

Lady M asked, "Would I be able to get rights to use a couple of your photos for exchange of 'free sample' of the products?"

I agreed, "Yes, we can do that. I'll draw up the paperwork in a couple days once I have a chance to go through the photos. I'll take the one which Lindsay is modeling...." Laura let out a scream as she fell over while trying to balance herself. I snapped a couple photos of Laura trying to get herself back up, "...never thought I'd see the day my sister would be in bitchesuit...thanks that made my day! Wynn, can you get Laura out before she hurts herself."

Sara asked, "What about Lindsay?"

I told her, "She appears to be enjoying herself and Andy likes what he sees! You can help get Sophie out of hers though." Wynn removed Laura from within the

bitchsuit and she went out to take a quick shower as Sophie would need one as well.

We watched as Lindsay managed to move around the studio on her knees and elbows. Lady M commented, "She seems to have experience being in one of these."

I told her, "I have no idea. Hey Andy, has Lindsay been in a bitchsuit before?"

Andy told me, "Yeah, way back when we still had the club we'd put her in one from time to time and she'd move about the stage. Brings back memories...damn miss having the club...oh well life goes on."

I told Sara, "Go ahead and get Lindsay out and she can use the shower in the Burgundy Suite. Since Laura and Sophie will be using the main guest one."

Chapter 9: The Separation of The Myers and Sara Does Lindsay

The next afternoon I had some free time and uploaded all the pictures I had taken from the night before. I found a couple which were suitable for Gary's site and sent those over to Lulu. I found two others I would 'release' to Lady M and sent those over along with a scanned copy of the notarized release. Laura had gone in with Lindsay and Sara to get a better understanding of the overall operations of The Budget Holstein. That evening after dinner I asked her to come to my office. I informed her, "So I talked to Gary last night. Bambi and him would be able to assist you with bringing over whatever you wanted from Marana. We can put the cross on the ACME truck. I have wardrobe boxes you can borrow. When do you want to go back to Marana?"

Laura told me, "The original plan would have been us heading back tomorrow afternoon since I was due back at the resort on Friday. Suppose we can go out tomorrow and I can turn in my resignation while I am down there. I'll give Miss Kitty a call later and confirm." She went back to her room to talk to Miss Kitty and then returned a short time later, "Hey, um....if it is not too much trouble could they stop at The Holstein Ranch on the way back so we can take Miss Kitty's stuff as well?"

I told her, "Might as well since it is on the way back." Laura confirmed with Miss Kitty and told me afternoon would be fine. I told her I'd call Gary and let him know. The next morning I went out to the garage and found the wardrobe boxes which had been seeing a lot of use this past year. After lunch Bambi and Gary came over with the ACME Truck. While Bambi was loading the wardrobe boxes Gary and I took a look around the loft, "So, I am thinking the cross should be able to fit over here by the fuck machine or could put it by the spanking bench."

Gary looked around, "Well, you need more space around the spanking bench than you do with the fuck machine, so I'd say your better off putting it there. We'd better head down, don't want to keep Bambi waiting."

We came down stairs and met Laura and Sophie in the Great Room. I told Wynn, "I am not certain when we are going to get back." I turned to Bambi and gave her Laura's address, "The three of us will head over there shortly in the Murano." A couple hours later we arrived at Laura's Dove Mountain house. I advised Gary and Bambi, "So the cross is up in her loft on the third level."

Bambi joked, "Third level?! That will cost you extra!" Playing along I told her to take it up Laura.

Miss Kitty came in a little later and saw me, "Hey Ron, sorry about all this."

I was confused, "About what exactly?"

Miss Kitty told me, "Dragging y'all out here and having to deal with Laura being a brat at your place until she can get her own." She could no longer contain herself and started laughing. I knew she was joking as soon as she mentioned the 'brat' part.

I laughed as well, "Okay...she's not that bad even if she did sleep with my ex-wife! Besides I finally got to see her in a bitchesuit!"

Miss Kitty was disappointed, "Wow, I would have loved to have seen that."

I told her, "How the next best thing, photos? I'll send them to you when I get back. Anyway, we will take your stuff over to the Holstein Ranch on our way back to Scottsdale." Miss Kitty went about gathering her clothes and necessities she would need. Everything else she wanted to take she could get later with her truck.

When she was done and returned, she saw Laura and asked, "Have you turned in your resignation yet?"

Laura told her, "Not yet, we'll stop over there before we head over to the Holstein Ranch. Shouldn't take long, they are not expecting me to show up today. I'll just drop off my badge, phone and laptop at my boss's office and be done with it...finally!"

Miss Kitty looked around, "Can't believe we are doing this, but it is for the best. The Holstein Ranch will do...not as lavish as this place, but a step or two up from the condo we had Henderson."

Laura laughed, "Which we'd probably still be living at now had I not gotten this fucking job!"

Miss Kitty added, "But, if it weren't for that job, I wouldn't be running Linda's original Budget Holstein and you wouldn't be able to go to Tennessee."

Laura replied, "Got me there. Okay, enough of this I am getting overwhelmed again. I've got my shit and Miss Kitty has her stuff she needs. Sophie is almost done packing and loading then we can get out here." Sophie and Bambi came down the stairs with some boxes and advised us this was everything. Laura told them, "Great. Sophie why don't you ride with Miss Kitty to the Holstein Ranch. Ron and I need to stop at the resort so I can turn in my work shit. We'll meet you at The Ranch a little later." Sophie and Miss Kitty left with Gary and Bambi following in the Acme Truck. Laura and I headed over to the resort and she told me, "Hopefully this will be painless and not take very long. I'll be back..."

Laura headed inside and made her way to the IT offices. She was surprised to see her boss was actually there for once; not as surprised as was her boss seeing Laura, "Abby, thought you were coming back tomorrow?"

Laura handed her the company phone and laptop along with her access card and resignation letter, "Actually I am done here. Consider this my resignation. You can send my final check to the address on the letter. Now if you excuse me, my brother and I need to head to an appointment out in Oro Valley."

Her boss was a bit surprised, "Um...Abby are you sure about this? I mean can we work something out?"

Laura was already on her way out the door, "Oh yes, I am *very* 'sure about this', and no, we are *way beyond* 'working something out'. Good day!" She was out the door and left her department without saying anything to anyone else. She exited the resort and got back in Murano and told me, "Wow! That felt good!"

I joked "Did you do a Johnny Paycheck and tell them to 'take this job and shove it!'"

Laura laughed, "Ron! You know I am more civil than that...of course had this been a few years back...well things might have been different." She took a deep breath, "Okay, that's finally done. You know what's funny is when I landed this job I was all excited and now this. I don't understand."

I told her, "Bad management. There are advantages of working for yourself. Alright, let's get over to the Holstein Ranch."

Upon arriving at the Holstein Ranch we saw Bambi and Sophie unloading boxes

handing them down to Miss Kitty and Gary. Also saw Linda's truck in the driveway. We headed inside and upon seeing Linda I asked, "Hey, so how's retirement treating you?"

Linda laughed, "So far cain't complain too much. I been visiting vendors these past couple weeks. Going to be heading out to San Francisco next week for the month." She turned her attention to Laura, "So Abigail..." Before Laura had a chance to correct her she corrected herself, "...I mean Abby, um do you have a timeline yet for your store?"

Laura explained, "From what Victoria has told me, we should be closing in the next two weeks or so. Lindsay along with her sister and niece are going to help me out with getting things started."

Linda reminded her, "Great, I've been through this...now...three times. I know it is a lot to do. When it all started way back then it was just Hal and I. Then after he passed Kayré and Olivia helped me out after school. Eventually we hired on more staff. Then Kayré went up to Scottsdale and opened that location with Sara then Lindsay. Gold Canyon was a little different...the ladies there I've known for years. They're sisters, I went to High School with their mother..."

I jokingly asked, "What year was that?"

Linda looked at me and laughed, "...I ain't saying...mainly because I cain't remember. Anyway, just take it slow. You have Kacie to help you with the administrative side of things. She will work with the local tax authority and town to get permits and business/tax license as a 'franchise operator'. She will also take care of all the personnel requirements for whomever you choose to hire. But, it is your store and you are ultimately responsible for its success. Anyway, since you are all here did you want to stay for dinner?"

Bambi heard Linda's offer, "Sorry Gary and I need to head back. We don't want to keep Bunny by herself with Bernie too long...especially since our mother is there. Ron, Abby and Sophie y'all can stay. Gary knows where you are going to put the cross and everything else Wynn can show us where to store." The two of them left with the ACME truck.

I told Linda, "Yeah, sure. Let me call Wynn and let her know." Linda went to help Olivia get some food prepped for all of us who were staying for dinner. I called Wynn, "Hey. Gary and Bambi just left The Holstein Ranch. Linda's here and asked us to stay for dinner. So I am thinking it will be at least a couple hours before we can head out. Gary knows where the cross is going in the loft. Everything else of theirs other than the wardrobes can go in the garage next to Sara's Road Runner."

Once we sat down for dinner Miss Kitty offered a toast, "To a new beginning!" She then asked, "Have you told your mother yet?"

Laura replied, "No...really should, just been putting it off. I'll call her when we get back to Scottsdale."

After dinner we headed back and during the drive Laura decided to call our Mother, "Laura so good to hear from you. How you doing? How's Miss Kitty and Sophie?"

Laura told her, "Sorry haven't talked to you in a while. Things have been a bit crazy. Miss Kitty and Sophie are doing well. I have some news and you may not be too happy with me about it though. So, Lynette and I are divorcing and going our separate personal and career paths. Actually, we both are going down the same career path as store managers of The Budget Holstein. She's taken over the Oro Valley location now that Miss Holstein has retired. I am opening my own location...outside of Nashville."

Lorena was surprised, but still supportive, "Oh okay. That's quite the news. Not surprised, knew you had not been tolerating the resort lately. When will Blanch and I get to see you again?"

Laura thought for a moment, "I suppose Sophie and I can come back out to Scottsdale for Christmas. I hope to get the store operational before then, not really sure how long things are going to take to get going. I close on the property in a couple more weeks. Sophie and I are staying with Ron and Sara in the mean time."

We arrived back at the Sagebrush house and did not see the Acme Truck. We headed inside and found Wynn in the kitchen, "You just missed them. They left like a couple minutes ago. Anyway, the cross is in place up in the loft and have to admit looks like it always been there. Abby and Sophie your clothes are in Laura's room. Everything else is in the garage. Andy and Lindsay have already retired for the night. Sara is taking a deep soak before bed."

Laura poured the four of us a glass of Brandy while Wynn scooped out some ice cream into bowls. As she sat down she took a deep breath, "Got a lot accomplished today. Separated myself from the fucking resort. Miss Kitty, Sophie and I moved out of the Marana house. Even told our mother what was I going to do. Now just need to sell the house in Marana and wait for The Cheetah to do his thing. So what's my next step in regards to Tennessee?"

I explained, "I think at this point, the main thing is you need to wait for the property to close. In the mean time though, I'd suggest setting up a conference call with Leslie and Charlotte so the three of you can work out what products you

want to carry.”

In a very rare instance Sophie made a stipulation to Laura, “I may regret later saying this...but I need it to be known: I am not involving myself in any way with regards to with your ventures with The Budget Holstein. You will need to hire yourself an operations manager who can manage that part of your life. Everything else I am still here for you.”

Laura was not upset and in fact quite the opposite, “Wow, this is the first time you have ever said anything like that to me...” Sophie started to apologize thinking she had erred but Laura continued, “...don't be sorry. I am glad you did. You absolutely are right you are going to be doing your own thing with The Cheshire's, so there is no reason I should be dragging you into The Budget Holstein. This is a matter I will take up with Leslie and Charlotte; perhaps they can recommend me someone for Operations Manager. Let's finish our night cap and head to bed, been a long day.”

Before I headed to bed I found the pictures I had of Laura in the bitchesuit and sent them to Miss Kitty. The next day Laura texted Charlotte and Leslie asking when they could do a conference call with her. Both replied back they would free after the grand kids had gone to bed. Since it was Friday, Lindsay and Sara would be spending the night together in the Burgundy suite. Sara arrived home a couple hours earlier than usual having stayed late for a client the night before. She found Wynn in the kitchen, “I need some suggestions for tonight. I want the attention to be on Lindsay tonight. However, I want a way in which we are both bound to bed for a set time while I can service her and be able to release myself after said time.”

Wynn thought for a moment, “Hmm...I see....well, I think we can do that. I can bound her to the foot of the bed, spread open with Sequfix restraints. Then have you in front of her hog cuffed with an ice timer connected between the ankle and wrist cuffs. You will also be fixed in place with Sequfix. The magnetic key along the cuff keys will be right in front of you, but you won't be able to get to those until the ice timer releases you from the hogtie. I think a one hour timer would be sufficient. You don't want to be hog cuffed for too long and Lindsay might get tired or desensitized after awhile to the stimulation. I can get things setup for y'all shortly.”

Sara liked this idea, “Great that sounds like a great plan. Forces me to give Lindsay attention and forces Lindsay to let me give her attention. I am going to take a soak before dinner.”

Before she left Wynn suggested, “I would suggest you two take your Yoga outfits up there with you so you won't need to come back to the main house to change.”

After dinner Leslie and Charlotte called Laura. Leslie asked, "How are things going with you in Arizona?"

Laura told her, "Not too bad. Got a lot done yesterday. Miss Kitty, Sophie and I got all our stuff out the Marana house and we will put the house on the market next week. While we were out that way I handed in my resignation. The divorce attorney is getting everything drawn up. At this point I just need to figure out my next moves with the Boutique Holstein. I did talk with Miss Holstein last night while we had layover for dinner at The Ranch. She told me Kacie will take care of permits and licenses as well as getting anyone I hire onboarded."

Charlotte commented, "Wow, that sounds awesome, would've love to have someone take care of all that crap for us when we opened the cafe. What can we do to help you?"

Laura advised, "Besides narrowing down the product line for this store, I need an operations manager. Sophie last night, told me that she was in no way going to involve herself with this part of my life since she is not going to be a part of this venture. She will still be my assistant for other parts of my life such as the consulting gig Ron, Andy and I operate."

Leslie replied, "Good for her! Say Charlotte, what do you think about having Miranda handling the operations?"

Charlotte told her, "She has done an excellent job with the cafe and has been asking for more responsibility. There really isn't anything more we can offer her here. What would she need to be doing?"

Laura wasn't really sure, "Good question. Let me see if I can find Lindsay..." She walked out to the Great Room and saw Lindsay on the sofa with Sara and Wynn watching a movie. She asked, "Hey Lindsay, could you help me out for a few minutes?"

Lindsay was unsure what Laura needed or if she was even being serious, "I suppose, what do you need?"

Laura explained, "I am on a call with Leslie and Charlotte. I need to know what an operations manger would be doing."

Lindsay told her, "Sure, let's go into the studio where it is a little quieter."

Laura put Leslie and Charlotte on speaker, "Hey guys putting y'all on speaker and have Lindsay with me."

Lindsay greeted them, "Hey Leslie and Charlotte. So Laura says you need to

know what an operations manager does. So my responsibilities are keeping on top of our inventory, especially with online orders, which y'all won't be doing so your inventory control will be much easier; being a liaison between *your* vendors and Kacie. In the beginning you are likely going to carrying much of the same products from our already established vendors which your manager would just be working with Kacie to restock those products. But, at some point you are going to discover local vendors with whom you will want to carry their products. While all three of our stores do carry a lot of the same products, each store does have a few unique products which only that location carries. This is partly due to some county restrictions plus some of the vendors prefer we only sell within their home area. Your operations manager will meet/recruit these vendors and negotiate an agreement to carry their products. Once that is done, then you will relay their information to Kacie and she will take care of getting them paid. For example the Superstition Mountain store is a few miles from where Arizona has the annual Reinsurance Festival. When the festival was in town Claudia and JoJo discovered a couple vendors with products they felt were a good match for their store. One vendor was fine with us selling her products at all three stores, but the other asked to only sell at the Superstition Mountain store as she is based in that area and wanted to stay local."

Charlotte commented, "Sounds very similar to what Miranda has done for us with the cafe and shop. The cafe we already have pretty well established relationship with a set of vendors, but the gift shop we are always carrying new and local products."

Lindsay did advised, "One other major detail is every Sunday around 11:00 AM Arizona time which would be 2:00 PM your time March to October or 1:00 PM the rest of the year because we don't play that day light savings crap. Anyways we have a conference call with all the operations managers and Kacie. So it would be myself for the Thirsty Cactus, Aubrey at Oro Valley and then Claudia and/or Jojo for the Superstition Mountain store. Abby should also participate on the call, or at least sit in until both her and her operations manager are comfortable. We don't do the calls on Easter, the week of 4th July and if Christmas and New Years Day fall on Sunday. Call typically lasts 30 to 45 minutes sometime less other times more, just depends on what is going on. I hope that helps."

Laura was very grateful for Lindsay's detailed explanation, "Yes it was. Thank you so much Lindsay!"

Leslie joked, "Hey Lindsay when you are coming back out here?"

Lindsay replied, "About a week before Abby opens the store. I will help her get the layout designed. If y'all have nothing else, I need to go Sara is expecting me."

Lindsay headed back to the Great Room and told Sara, "Let me go pee and grab my Yoga bag and I'll meet you over in the suite."

Sara smiled, "Sounds good. I have something special planned for us tonight." After Lindsay had left Sara told Wynn, "My bag is already up there so lets go ahead and head up." Sara and Wynn headed over to the suite and when Sara entered the bedroom she noticed Wynn's handy work, "Someone has been busy! Okay what do I need to do?"

Wynn told her, "Remove your shoes for sure and whatever else you want." Sara removed her shoes, skirt and tank just leaving her in stockings and her armor. Wynn directed her, "Okay on to the head of the bed, but face towards the foot." Sara climbed onto the bed and Wynn secured her in place with the Segufix. "You will notice in front of you is the magnetic key and attached to the post are the keys for the cuffs. You won't be able to get to these while hogcuffed. Once the ice timer thaws in about an hour or so you will be able to let yourself out. Lindsay will be strapped down in front of you so you have direct access to her pussy and she can not squirm her way away from you!" Wynn cuffed Sara's ankles and then her wrists. After attaching the ice lock via quick links to the chains of both sets of cuffs she had Sara hogcuffed in place.

Lindsay came up the stairs and into the room, she saw Sara, "Oh, the roles are reversed tonight!"

Wynn laughed, "Yes, but you are still going to bound to the bed as well. Go ahead and remove your shoes and skirt then get on the bed with your pussy facing Sara. Your head will slightly hang over the edge." Lindsay removed her skirt and shoes. Wynn noticed Lindsay was not wearing her belt, but did have a thong on, "and your thong as well." After Lindsay was naked from the waist down she got on the bed and Wynn position and strapped her down. She explained to Lindsay, "So Sara is bound in place by the Sequifix, but she is also hog cuffed with an ice timer. Once the ice timer thaws she will be able to reach in front of her to get the keys and be able to let both of you out....provided she does not drop the key. The ice timer should last about an hour. I will leave you two be, however I will leave the door to the suite open. I'll come back up and check on you in a couple hours, if you have gotten yourselves out then you can close the door, otherwise Sara was clumsy and I'll need to let you two out!"

Lindsay laughed, "Okay. Thank you Wynn!"

After Wynn left Sara asked, "You ready?"

Lindsay giggled, "Been ready!" Sara started slow and gentle on Lindsay's pussy and clit. Lindsay moaned, "Oh wow. That feels so good..." Sara steadily increase her simulation on Lindsay, "oh boy...oh boy....yes...I am going to cum!" Lindsay

had her first of what would be several orgasms over the course of the hours.

Sara wasn't even trying to get herself free; she was simply trying to stretch a little when the ice timer separated, "Oh my hands are free. Let me readjust myself" She got her cuffed hands over her head and carefully took the Sequfix key removing the locking post to get to the cuff keys. She removed the cuffs from her wrists and then told Lindsay, "I think it is going to be easier for me to get you freed first then you can release me. Looks like most of the restraints connect down towards your waist." Sara removed the magnetic locks and was able to get Lindsay freed. She handed the magnetic key to Lindsay, "Here, you can release me."

Lindsay took the key and had planned on taking advantage of Sara in her restrained state, but then realized Sara was still in her armor. Knowing Sara would need to be standing, thus unrestrained in order to remove her armor there was no use leaving Sara restrained, "Well..seeing as you are in your armor still...okay." She released Sara and then picked up her skirt off the floor and put it back on. Sara retrieved her skirt and tank putting those back on as well. Lindsay suggested, "How about we have some wine while we are waiting on Wynn?"

Sara nodded, "Not a bad idea."

Lindsay's bladder had other ideas, "Oh...let me visit the bathroom real quick."

Sara went into the sitting room and pulled a random bottle out the wine fridge along with a couple glass from the cupboard beside the fridge. She uncorked the bottle and poured them both a glass. Lindsay came into the sitting room and Sara handed her a glass, "Here you go. Why don't you try out the window seat this time. There are pillows below, might be able to catch the sunset reflecting off the mountains."

Wynn came up a short time later while they were sipping wine and chatting, "Oh okay, Sara managed to get you both out. Do you want me to clear off the bed?"

Sara replied, "Yeah, I think so. We are pretty much done for the night. Might do a scarf make out session after we finish this bottle."

Wynn laughed, "Alright....you now what Sophie and I should try that out...now that's an idea. Anyway let me get the bed cleared off and I'll be on my way."

Chapter 10: How About A Nice Cage?

Monday Laura spent most of the day over at the Thirsty Cactus Budget Holstein going over details with Kacie. While her and Kacie were having lunch her cell

rang, "Oh, my mother."

Lorena asked, "How long are you still going to be in Arizona, Blanche and I are thinking of coming up to see you and Ron later this week?"

Laura told her, "At least this week, I might be going out next week for a couple days. Best if you talk to Ron and make sure he can accommodate y'all."

Lorena replied she would give me a call. I had several projects I was working on at the moment as I had a good streak of winning bids. Wynn paged me, "Your mother on the house line."

I picked up the house line, "Hello, what do I owe this call?"

Lorena told me, "Spoke to Abby earlier. Blanche and I would like to come up later this week for a couple days to see you two."

I joked, "You do know Sophie is here too..."

Lorena laughed, "I knew that. Can we come up say Wednesday and leave Friday morning?"

I looked at my schedule, "Let me look...I've got nada going on during that time; that sounds good. I'll let Abby know when she gets home tonight. Y'all haven't been to this house since it was finished. When you come in tell the guard 'Lot 8' and they will give you a visitors pass and directions."

I just wrapped up with her when Wynn paged me, "Gary on your office line."

I picked up the office line, "What's up Gary, got another vendor?"

Gary replied, "Yes. This one does cages."

I joked, "I already have a cage, a giant one at that from that mistress you did an exchange with over in Kierland area."

Gary did not recall, "I don't recall that one."

I teased him, "Getting forgetful in your old age, or is it because you are a father now? She took the caning platforms and also gave us the wheel we never really used."

Gary remembered now, "Oh, okay yes Mistress Keewatin! Blame it on the lack of sleep...you know because of the newborn!"

I told him, "Um...no...wouldn't know we've never had kids."

Gary ignored my remarks and explained, "Anyway this vendor sells smaller single person cages."

I told him, "Okay, I don't have in issue...well may be I would...what day?"

Gary told me, "Tonight?"

I advised him, "That is fine, give me a warning call before y'all come." After I was done with Gary I headed over to the kitchen to fill Wynn in on what was going on. She was working on lunch, "So our mother and Blanche are coming up Wednesday and will leave on Friday. Gary has a cage vendor coming in tonight, he'll call me before they come."

Wynn laughed, "Just what you need another cage..."

I explained, "Yeah, that's what I told Gary as we already have that giant one up in the loft. Anyway, these are supposed to be single person cages."

Wynn thought for a moment, "I could see Sara locking Lindsay in a cage."

I added, "Or Lindsay locking herself in the cage whilst waiting for Sara. Oh boy!"

Wynn confirmed, "So you said Lorena and Blanche are coming up on Wednesday. I am assuming you are going to be putting them in the Burgundy Suite?"

I told her, "Yeah, since Laura is in the Southern Suite."

Wynn replied, "Okay, I'll work on that suite tomorrow. Haven't touched it since Lindsay and Sara were in there on Friday. Usually do it on Thursdays."

That afternoon Laura returned and asked, "Did mother call you about visiting?"

I told her, "Yes, she did. They will come up on Wednesday and then leave Friday."

She saw Wynn and asked, "Hey Wynn, could you help me out. I want to make my mother's chicken enchiladas for that first night."

I remembered the last time we had them, "Oh wow! Yeah, you made those when Sara and I came out with Andy and Lindsay to fix Linda's personal sever."

Wynn told her, "Sure, I am always up to trying to make something new. Do you have her recipe?"

Laura hesitated, "Yeah...somewhere. I know I brought it with me along with her cookbook. Where did Gary and Bambi unload our stuff?"

I told her, "In the garage below the FROG, next to Sara's Roadrunner."

She checked the clock and told us, "Okay, I'll go look for it." Fortunately, there were only a couple boxes for her to look through and she returned in a few minutes and handed the recipe to Wynn, "Here we are!"

Wynn looked it over, "Not too bad, just will need to figure out how to scale it up. If you are free Wednesday morning we can go to the market together and get everything."

I was thinking about what I could do, "Hmm....not to try to out do you Laura, but I thinking I'll grill some Salmon on Thursday. We're at that time of year now, soon as the sun goes down it gets really nice outside. We can take advantage of the patio on those nights. Be nice to get some more use...oh and before I forget...not that it matters to you Laura, but Gary has another vendor coming out tonight."

Laura laughed, "Oh great, what are you going to try to stuff me into this time?! Oh and Miss Kitty thanks you for the 'blackmail' photos."

I replied, "Hey, she never told me what she was going to do with them. Anyway, this vendor does small cages."

Laura sighed, "That would be a product I'd be interested in, but since I won't have a loft anymore. Oh well, I need to make sacrifices somewhere. There are times I don't think I am doing the right thing with this new venture."

I understood her hesitation, "Yeah, I get it....it's a big change, but you really won't know until you try. Think back to when we started our consulting gig, especially when we decided to split up with you staying in Vegas and me coming out here. That worked out in the end and we were able to get Andy to join our team."

Laura told me, "I know, and I do believe this will work. Sounds like Leslie and Charlotte have someone lined up for Operations Manager. I'll fly out next week to meet her and close on the storefront. Might do some furniture shopping while I am out there too, not sure yet as I don't know when we are going to move in."

Everyone else was returning and as we had dinner I announced, "Tonight Gary has vendor coming over. All I know is the product is small single person cages." I looked over to Sara and Lindsay and they both seemed excited. I continued,

"Wednesday, my mother and Blanche are coming up to visit us. They will leave on Friday morning, so Sara and Lindsay can still use the suite that evening."

After dinner Sophie helped Wynn clean up the kitchen while Andy was working on getting his lab setup again. Lindsay and Sara were watching a movie with Laura. Gary called and told me they were almost at my house. Couple minutes later the door bell chimed and Wynn answered the door, "Evening Gary!"

Gary laughed, "Ah we meet again. My cage guy is unloading and will be bringing in the three cages shortly."

Wynn told him, "Well, you know where the studio is, I need to finish with the evening dishes."

Gary asked, "Ron in his office?" She nodded 'yes'. "Okay, that works." Gary walked into my office, "Thanks again for letting me use your studio. Sir Finley should be coming in shortly, in fact I better open the doors for him." Gary went back out to the foyer and held the doors open for Sir Finley, "Straight back then hang a left."

Sir Finley came in with a cart with three cages stacked, "Ah nice amount of space here. Let me get setup." In a couple minutes Sir Finley had the cages setup.

I came out my office and Gary introduced me, "Sir Finley, this is my friend Ron Merlot."

Sir Finley shook my hand with a very firm grip, "Pleasure Mister Merlot. Now, do you have some volunteers who can demonstrate these cages?"

I laughed, "Oh yes I do and they are quite willing too. Sara, Lindsay come on in here!" Sara and Lindsay walked in and introduced them, "This is Sara my wife and her friend Lindsay." I noticed the first cage looked like a mini version of the big one we had in the play loft, "Wow, this first one looks like a miniature version of the one Mistress Keewatin gave us many years ago."

Sir Finley was getting the cages ready and stopped when he heard the name, "Did you say Mistress Keewatin?"

I replied, "Yeah, we swapped some toys a few years back and she gave us a very large cage. My sister-in-law and her partner both fit in it and they are not small."

Lindsay added, "I was in there too with them."

Sir Finley was intrigued, "Do you still have that cage; Could I see it?"

I explained, "Yes, it is up in our play loft. Follow me."

We headed up the stairs and Sir Finley saw the cage, "Wow, so that's what happened to it! This was one of the largest cages I ever built and like a fool I never took pictures. Back when I made that cage there was not much demand for this size. Seems now people are building bigger dungeons. I asked Mistress Keewatin about it last year as wanted to get some photos for archival purposes, but she said she no longer had it and did not recall who had it now."

I joked, "Yeah, I've seen the size of the houses people are having built now...anyway I can get some photos for you later after you demo the cages you brought."

Sir Finley thanked me, "Works. Yes, let me demo the other cages." We headed back to the studio, "So as you can see this first one is a single person version of the one you have in your loft. Still has the leather top too."

Sophie came into the studio and saw the first cage, "Oh that is nice looking cage. Looks like a small version of yours Ron."

I turned around as was not expecting Sophie, "It is actually. So this is Sophie, my sister's personal assistant. Did you want to try this cage?"

Sophie didn't need to be asked twice and crawled inside closing the door behind her. Laura walked in, "Ah, Sophie in her natural habitat! We used to have a cage in Henderson, but it was rickety old thing and we didn't bother bringing it with us to Marana. Always talked about getting a cage for my loft, but we already had enough crap up there."

Sir Finley informed us, "You can also upgrade this one to have an electromagnetic timer lock or the standard hasp/padlock setup. This next one can be customized so it looks more like a fancy piece of furniture instead of a bondage toy. You can change the styles of the bars and even the wood. Who wants to try this one." Sara volunteered and found that she fit well inside.

Laura looked at the cage, "Hmm...so this one could be made to look more like a piece of furniture."

Sir Finley added, "We casually call this one the 'camo cage' as it is hidden in plain site."

Laura asked, "Do you have other samples of how you could build this cage?"

Sir Finley told her, "I do at my shop in northern Buckeye. I'll give you a card later." He moved on to the third, "This final one is more basic, but still secure."

This is more your dungeon cage than a cage disguised as fancy piece of furniture.”

Lindsay looked at the cage and noticed it had two doors opening outward, “I like the double doors, don't need as much space for the doors. Also like the padded leather floor. So, how does this one lock though?”

Sir Finley hand her two pieces of L-shaped metal rods. One end had a hasp cut-out, “Takes these and a couple padlocks then go inside.” Lindsay took the metal pieces and the locks then crawled into the cage, “Close the doors. Now, you will notice on the door to your left at both the top and the bottom next to the edge there is hole which pairs up with a hole in the frame of the cage.”

Lindsay saw what Sir Finely was describing and quickly figured out how the locking mechanism worked, “Oh neat. So insert this rod into the hole and I see the hasp fits over a loop on the other door.” She quickly inserted the rods and locked herself in the cage.

I had retrieved my camera equipment and started taking photos of the cage Sophie was in. Sophie asked, “May I come out now?” Sir Finely unlocked the door and Sophie crawled out. I moved over to the next cage Sara was in and took several photos of that one as well, once I got Laura away from it, “Laura move or I'll have Sophie stuff you in that first cage!”

Sir Finley let Sara out and she noticed Lindsay in the last cage and giggled, “I think she likes it! Hmm...may be we could get one of these for our 'suite'?”

I reminded her, “Which is also will be used by mother and Blanche when they come. Though....how heavy is that cage?”

Sir Finley explained, “It is the lightest of three. Two people could easily move it.”

I commented, “Yeah, that might work. The closet in there is fairly deep and wide so the cage could be stashed in there when you two are not using it.”

Sara walked over to Sir Finley and asked, “Can I buy this one now I'll give you cash?”

Sir Finely warned her, “This is hand made, so there is lot a labor involved. Can you give me \$500 for it?”

I was not sure if that was a good price or not. I looked over to Gary as he was more familiar with these products and he nodded 'yes'. Sara countered, “\$400 CASH.”

Sir Finely was impressed and called her, "If you can present me with \$400 in cash before I leave, it is yours!"

Sara replied, "Done, give me a couple minutes and I'll be back."

Wynn was shocked, "Wow, Sara is actually spending her own money!"

I joked and reminded her, "If it's on Lindsay of course!"

Lindsay still the cage objected, "Hey, you make it sound like she spoils me!"

Wynn laughed, "So what, you got a problem with that?"

Lindsay laughed, "...oh well...I suppose, not."

Sara returned with the \$400 in cash and handed it to Sir Finely, "Here you go!"

Sir Finley laughed as he took the money, "Well, one less cage to lug back and I am \$400 richer." He handed Sara the keys to the locks, "She's all yours!"

I told Sara, "Go ahead and let Lindsay out so Gary and Wynn can take it up the suite. Wynn don't worry about trying to fit the cage into the closet tonight, we have a couple days still before our mother and Blanche come." Sir Finely told us he was going to get the remaining two cages loaded. I told him, "While I am doing photos let me get some photos of Sara and Lindsay in your big cage. I'll get these photos over to you in a couple days along with the release paperwork. Wynn can you guide Sir Finely to the way out?" Wynn lead Sir Finely out the studio and to the front door. Meanwhile Sara and Lindsay headed up to the loft and got into the cage so I could get some photos of them inside.

I returned to the foyer to find Laura and Sir Finley chatting, "Here is my card. You can come out anytime you like, I just ask you call ahead so we know to expect a visitor."

Laura took the card, "Will do. Would I be able to have it shipped to Tennessee?"

Sir Finley laughed, "If you pay the freight costs, I will ship it anywhere you want."

After Sir Finley and Gary left Laura asked me, "Any chance we can go out to his studio later this week? I'd like to get one of those custom cages. It kills two stones, gives me a cage I can put Sophie into and a nice piece of furniture for our new place."

I laughed and advised her, "I believe you meant 'kills two birds'. I think we could on Friday. I've got a lot of work right now and I would like to wrap up most of it

before mother and Blanche come.”

Tuesday after breakfast when everyone had left Wynn asked me, “Hey, could you help me out in the Burgundy Suite? Want to try to get that cage into the closet.”

I joked, “Sure, I'll bring my big ass shoehorn!” Wynn looked at me rather oddly and not amused with my joke, “Or not...lets go take a look and see what we are dealing with.”

We headed up to the suite and I noticed the bed was a mess, “Wynn! This bed...”

Wynn reminded me, “I told you yesterday I have not had a chance to clean in here yet. I at least made it look a bit more presentable before Gary came up.”

I laughed, “I know, just giving you a hard time. Oh hell, Gary wouldn't care, I've seen his and Bunny's bed. Okay, let's see what we are dealing with here.” I opened the closet door and found a wooden cabinet filled with toys on one side and there were shelves on the other side. “Well, I wasn't expecting this. If I move it over, you can't open the drawers.”

Wynn was looking around the suite, “If we put this sofa table somewhere else, we could put the cabinet on that wall.”

I looked over and saw what Wynn was talking about, “Okay, what do we do with the sofa table?”

Wynn thought for a moment, “How about in the hall from the foyer to the FROG stairs?”

I told her, “Okay, that works. Let's carefully get this down the stairs.” Fortunately the table was not very heavy, just bulky. Nonetheless we managed to get it down the stairs and put it in the hallway next to the stairs to the FROG.” We headed back into the suite and attempted to move the cabinet out the closet. This turned out to be a lot heavier than it appeared, however we did not have to move it very far. With the cabinet out the closet we were able to get the cage into the closet. I returned to my office to recover while Wynn went to work on getting the suite cleaned. The next morning mother called and informed me they would be up in the early afternoon. I reminded them, “Sounds good, as I mentioned before be sure to tell the guard 'Lot 8'.” Wynn and Laura were in the kitchen working on a shopping list. I informed them, “Mother says they will be up in the early afternoon.”

Laura commented, “We are heading to the market now. Did you call Sir Finley to see if we could come to his shop on Friday?”

I had forgotten about that or was it I was not sure if she was serious, "No, I'll give him a call now."

Laura and Wynn left for the market and I went back to my office to call Sir Finley, "Ron Merlot here. Did you get the photos and paperwork I sent you?"

Sir Finley confirmed, "Yes, I did. Thank you for those. Was your sister still wanting to come out to my shop?"

I told him, "Yes, she is. We are thinking this Friday might be good for us."

Sir Finley advised me, "Sure, that is fine."

Chapter 11: A Visit from Down South and Bernie Zinfandel

Laura and Wynn returned from the market with what they would hope be enough groceries to feed everyone tonight. I decided I should do one final check of the Burgundy Suite before mother and Blanche arrived. I looked around the room and checked in the bathroom; everything appeared to be in order. A couple hours later the door bell chimed. Wynn opened the door, "Welcome Misses Merlot and Blanche!"

They walked in and my mother commented, "This place is a lot bigger than I remembered. Is Ron or Abigail around?"

Wynn informed her, "Ron is in his office working on a job right now. Abby is across the way at The Budget Holstein meeting with Kacie. She will be back in a couple hours and will be making dinner tonight. Come on into the great room and I'll let Ron know you are here. Just leave your bags here, I'll take them over to your suite shortly." Mother and Blanche headed into the great room and took a seat on the sectional. Wynn came into my office, "Your mother and Blanche have arrived. Laura went over to the Budget Holstein for a couple hours to go over some details with Kacie."

I told her, "Okay, let me make a quick note where I am on this job and I'll be right out." I noted my progress on the job then headed into The Great Room, "Nice of you two to come out. Wasn't expecting y'all out until around Christmas."

Lorena commented, "With Abigail leaving suddenly, we decided it might be a good idea to see her before she comes 'too busy'."

I confessed, "Well, if it were not for Linda constantly bringing me down your way for her store or Corona de las Estrellas, I'd likely be 'too busy' as well. So you haven't seen the house since we had it fully furnished."

Blanche asked, "This place is smaller right?"

I explained, "Yes, but this house is more sprawled out compared to the Fairy Duster house. Also, most of this house with the exception of the loft and the FROG is single level. The Fairy Duster house was three levels of the same footprint. The lot is bigger than the other house too as we have the detached 3-car garage on the north end of the lot. Let's take a walk." We ended up in the loft, "So this loft is a bit of an odd shape as it does follow the original footprint of the house. The previous owner added on the studio and office on the east side."

Blanche noticed the Saint Andrews cross, "That cross looks familiar!"

I replied, "Yeah, it was in Laura's loft. The place she is buying in Tennessee is much smaller and she was not going to have room there. So she gave it to me and I had Gary and Bambi bring it over."

Mentioning the Zinfandel's reminded mother, "So Bunny had her girl already?"

I replied, "Yes. Trying to recall when...oh yeah when Linda Holstein had her retirement party here. I'll call them later today and see if we can go over there tomorrow. Alright, lets head down and I'll take you to your suite." We came back through the kitchen and into the foyer.

Blanche was surprised, "Oh wow, didn't even see this section when we came in."

I told them, "This hallway leads to the attached 3-car garage which had the FROG. I don't think it was attached when the house was first built. I believe when the previous owner added the powder room, office and studio on the east side they built the new hallway. Okay, we will head up these stairs." We made our way to the sitting room, "As you can tell, this is Dundee's handy work. He decided instead of just leaving this space open and unused he'd create a sitting area. I believe there should be some wine in this fridge, unless Sara and Lindsay drank it all. There are glasses in the cabinet next to the fridge."

My mother walked over to the window seat and looked out, "Wow, what a view. I could see myself sitting here with a glass of wine."

I joked, "Sorry Blanche, you will have to settle for having your wine on the chaise lounge!"

Blanche laughed, "We'll see about that..."

I told them, "Okay, let's head to the main suite, through this hall and these double doors." We headed into the suite and I explained, "You have an en-suite bathroom with a garden tub and full size shower. Wynn left you plenty of towels

on the counter. When you finish with the towels, deposit them in the bamboo hamper over yonder. If you need more linens, there should be some in the cabinet over here. I need to get back to the project I am currently working on. Laura should be back soon."

I returned to my office and resumed the current project, which I had wrapped up when Laura returned a couple hours later. Her, Sophie and Wynn went to work on getting tonight's dinner prepped. Wynn came in to my office and asked, "Are we doing shifts in the kitchen or eating out on the patio?"

I looked at the thermometer and while I was still a little warm, but the sun would be going down soon which would cause the temperature to fall fairly quickly, "Once the sun goes down, it should cool off enough for us to use the patio. Still another half hour until Sara, Lindsay and Andy get back."

Once everyone returned I opened the doors from the great room to the patio. Wynn went to setup the table while Sophie and Laura started putting all the food out on the kitchen island. Laura announced, "The Merlot's Chicken Enchiladas are ready! Grab a plate and help yourself."

Lindsay asked, "Abby would you like me to choose some wine to pair?"

Laura laughed, "Sure! You know better than I do. You'll be our resident wine stewardess!"

Lindsay went to the wine fridge under the stairs and grabbed a couple bottles of red wine. Everyone had their food and we are all out on the patio when Lorena lifted her glass, "A toast to Abigail..." Laura looked over at our mother who realized her mistake, "I mean Abby!" As she enjoyed the meal she commented, "This is the second time now you have made my Chicken Enchiladas and once again they have turned out as good as when I used to make them."

Laura joked, "Well, guess I know what I'll be making when we come out again for Christmas."

As everyone was finishing their meal I told them, "When you are done, just leave your plates on the table. Wynn and Sophie will take care of the rest. Come on over to the grand lawn and we can sit around the fire pit."

My mother and Blanche came over and sat across from Laura and I. Blanche commented, "So peaceful over here!"

I explained, "Sure is. There is open space between us and Lot 7 to the north and then the other lots on the west are across from the circle. There is nothing, but natural state trust land to the east. You can almost make out our other house to

the south. We are closer to the Zinfandel's than the Fairy Duster house, but still a ways away."

Lorena asked, "So you didn't bother with a pool here?"

I reminded her, "The only reason we had a pool at the Fairy Duster house was because Martina wanted one and she paid to have it installed. The Acme House already had one. There is a hot tub pad over on the north side of the lawn. At some point I may end up getting one installed. Have to wait and see."

Wynn and Sophie joined us after topping off everyone's wine glasses. We chatted for a couple more hours. Wynn announced, "Sophie and I are going to get the ice cream and brandy ready." Sophie returned with a tray of brandy and Wynn brought a tray with bowls of ice cream.

Andy and Lindsay finished their ice cream and announced, "Well we are going to head to bed. Good night all!" Sara, Sophie and Wynn also announced they were heading to bed. Laura and I stayed outside with mother and Blanche for about another hour. By that time we were all falling asleep. I shut off the fire pit and then we headed back inside closing the bi-fold doors.

The next morning while Wynn and Sophie handled the dishes mother, Blanche, Laura and I headed down to the Zinfandel's. Bambi greeted us at the door, "Welcome. Bunny will be out shortly. Claudette is still asleep."

Bunny came out with Bernie, "Here she is: Bernice Persephone Zinfandel!" Mother asked if she could hold Bernie and Bunny gladly handed her over, "Oh please take her, gives me a chance to *breath*."

Blanche asked, "So how's motherhood treating you?"

Bunny laughed, "Not quite as I was expecting. But then, I really didn't know what to expect." She asked, "Lorena, she will at some point sleep through the night...right?"

Lorena told her, "Yeah she will...eventually. Abby was a wild one up at all hours of the night..."

I joked, "Well, that certainly explains a lot and up until a few years ago she still was!"

Laura objected, "Been more than a few year since I've been up all night. Sadly, I don't think I'd be able to do that now even if I tried...though there were some very late nights at the resort."

Lorena added, "Ron on the other hand seemed to sleep most of the way through the night. Of course by then, I knew how to get him back to sleep fairly quickly. Just watch out, before you know it she will be all grown up and move to the other side of the country!"

Laura laughed, "Trying to make me feel guilty even before I leave!"

Lorena replied, "May be...at least you and Miss Kitty were close by these last few years."

We chatted for a couple more hours before heading back to the house. About an hour before everyone was to arrive home I went out and fired up the grill. I headed back inside to get fish prepped. Meanwhile Wynn and Sophie scrubbing potatoes and wrapping them in tin foil. I took the potatoes out and placed them on the upper rack of the grill so they would bake and then put the salmon on the grill. Wynn and Sophie got the green beans going. Lindsay and Sara came home first a little early. Sara warned me, "I am going to be a little later tomorrow Miss Bordeaux is going to be coming in the late afternoon."

Lindsay told me, "I'll ride back with Andy tomorrow night. How soon until dinner?"

I told her, "Almost done, just waiting on Andy."

Lindsay laughed, "Aren't we always! Should I pick a wine again?"

Laura was almost begging Lindsay, "Yes! Please do. I don't what goes with what. I am more of a brandy girl!"

Lindsay giggled and went to select a couple bottles from the fridge below the stairs, "How about these bottles of Chardonnay....from Sprout's?"

Wynn teased her, "Don't knock it until you try it!"

I laughed, "Also applies to those exotic beers Andy always buys me."

Lindsay reminded me, "I've told you what happens when you let him loose in Trade Joe's unsupervised!"

Again we sat out on the patio and tonight seemed a lot cooler. I started up the fire pit near the table and commented, "Hmm....the chill of an early fall." After dinner we all once again sat around the fire pit on the grand lawn and chatted. Lorena asked Laura, "So you mentioned last night about coming back for Christmas?"

Laura replied, "I hope we can. I will have an operations manager running the store and at least one other employee. Of course that is assuming we have opened yet."

Blanche asked, "When do you plan on opening?"

Laura told her, "No idea yet. I am going back out next week to do the final closing on the property. Kacie is suppose to take care of all my licensing and permitting, but I still need to hire an operations manager and a couple employees. Plus get merchandise for that store."

Lindsay commented, "On the subject of Kacie, she wants to go out with you next time. I suppose I should come out too, so I can get an idea of the layout of the store. Plus it gives me a chance to see Leslie, who will be working for you while her grand kids are in school."

Laura was please, "Oh good, so I don't have to go about all this alone...yet."

Lindsay reminded her, "I still go out again about a week before your opening to help get the store ready. I might even stay out there during your first week to help you out."

Sara joked, "Wow! Two weeks away from you...that'll be so wonderful!"

Lindsay objected, "Hey...Brat!"

Sara kidded, "I know you are, but what am I?"

Wynn and Sophie came out with ice cream and brandy. A short time later everyone retired for the night. The next morning after breakfast Lorena and Blanche went back to the FROG to pack up. They came back to the main house and Blanche commented, "The suite was very nice. We look forward to staying there again when we come up for Christmas."

Mother asked, "By the way, what's with the cage in the closet?"

I laughed, "Sara bought it the other day when Gary had a vendor doing a demo in the studio. Her and Lindsay use that room on Friday nights. Andy goes to bed early that night as he needs to get up early to open their Fountain Hills store on Saturdays."

Blanche laughed, "Sara keeps Lindsay in a cage all night?"

I replied, "I think it is more Lindsay puts herself in the cage while waiting for Sara to come home or get ready for their evening together."

After they left Wynn informed me, "Since Lindsay and Sara are going to be using the Burgundy Suite tonight I'll get on it."

I reminded her, "Laura and I are going to pay a visit to Sir Finley. We'll likely grab some lunch while we're out."

Chapter 12: Sir Finley's Shop and The Future Boutique Holstein

I looked up the address on Sir Finley's card and discovered he was in the northern portion of Buckeye out near Surprise and Peoria. An hour later Laura and I arrived at his shop which was a large out-building behind his residence. We walked in and saw several cages in various stage of construction. He saw us, "Ah Ron and Laura nice to see you here. Let me introduce my business and life partner, Julia." An older lady around Sophie's height came over and greeted us. Sir Finley confirmed, "Okay, so Laura is looking for a cage that will be more like a piece of furniture, any idea as to what you want?"

Laura told them, "Honestly, I really don't know. I am going to be getting all new furniture as what was at the Marana house is being sold as part of the divorce settlement."

Julia told her, "Well, let me show you some pieces and see if we can narrow down to something you like. How big of a piece do you need?"

Laura wasn't sure how to answer her question so I told Julia, "The cage is going to be used by Sophie and she is about your size Julia."

Julia and Laura disappeared deep into the shop. I chatted with Sir Finley, "So how long does it take you to make one of these?"

Sir Finley told me, "Depends on the material and design....on average close to a month from when we put the design to paper to the final product. Julia does all the metal work while I do wood working."

I was impressed, "Wow. So how did you end up getting in this line of products?"

Sir Finley explained, "When I met Julia, her father made cages and was involved with the fetish community. He worked with both metal and wood. When he became ill Julia took over his current orders and put out a request for a wood worker since she only worked with metal. She had only planned on commissioning me until she had gotten caught up with his orders, then solely focus on metal. However, the demand for wooden cages just kept growing. Now 20+ years later here we are!"

I was amazed and impressed, "Well thank you both for continuing to make these products. It is not always easy to find high quality dungeon furniture made in this country, much less local. Curious how did you get connected with Gary?"

Sir Finley explained, "I've worked with his partner Zac Acme for many years and met Gary when he had GZ Fetishes."

I told him, "I am very familiar with Zac Acme, he was the 'Z' of GZ Fetishes before Gary bought out his share and took on the Acme name. That was right about the time I came back to Arizona with Martina. Gary opened his Phoenix branch shortly thereafter and then built next to us on the street behind where we are now."

Julia and Laura returned. Julia informed Sir Finley, "So, Miss Merlot here is going to go with the bedside table cage in black walnut and she wants to add a timer lock."

Laura explained, "From a distance it just looks like fancy bedside table."

I told her, "Well now you just need to find yourself a bed that will match for your room."

Laura informed me, "Oh no, this will be in Sophie's room. It will be her 'safe place' where she can take a 'time out' and clear her head or just get away from me for a while."

I laughed, "Oh, I can relate! We are an odd bunch aren't we!"

Julia told Laura, "We will need a 25% deposit to get started. Also need the address so we can figure what your freight charges are going to run."

Laura told them, "I don't know the address off hand. I am supposed to be closing on the property next week."

I told them, "It is Franklin, Tennessee if that helps."

Julia replied, "Yeah, that will do for now. I thinking about 3-weeks from design to build and then another week for shipping."

Laura asked, "Any chance you could hold off on the shipping until I know more....but then again three weeks I should have a better idea."

I reminded her, "Once you close you can move in at anytime. You don't need to wait for your store to be done. That's what Kayré and Kacie did, they moved into their residence long before the store moved. Of course that was because Linda

was too stubborn...I mean busy in Oro Valley to delegate the Scottsdale store relocation to Kayré."

Laura replied, "True, but I don't want to move until everything is finalized between myself, Miss Kitty and The Cheetah."

Julia asked upon hearing the name 'Kayré', "as in Holstein?"

I laughed, "Yes. We've worked quite a bit with Linda since coming out to Arizona."

Laura added, "The store I am opening in Tennessee is going to be smaller version of her Budget Holstein stores. Yeah, Sophie and I could move in before you ship. I'll let you know of the address when I close next week." Laura and I stopped at a Barbecue joint on our way back. As we ate lunch Laura commented, "Wow, I am really doing this. I just hope I am not biting off more than I can handle. This not like when we went from Vegas to Marana."

I reminded her, "You are not doing this alone, you have Kacie, Lindsay and Leslie to help you out. You'll do fine."

Back at the Sagebrush house Lindsay came home and asked Wynn for help pulling the cage out the closet. Her and Wynn went up to the Burgundy suite and Wynn asked, "Where do you want this?"

Lindsay looked around the room and decided, "Right here should be fine, guess a little away from the closet." Lindsay and Wynn pulled the cage out and set it next to the toy cabinet that Wynn and I had pulled out earlier in the week to make room for the cage. Lindsay looked at the cabinet and asked, "Wasn't there a table over here before?"

Wynn told her, "Yeah, it is down in the hall by the stairs. The cabinet Ron and I moved out so we could stash your cage in the closet while his mother and Blanche were here this week. I am assuming you are going to use this after dinner?"

Lindsay explained, "Yeah, Sara will want to take her meditating soak before we play. So I'll put myself in the cage, then gag and cuff myself. I might put myself in my belt too."

Sara arrived home and we had dinner. After dinner Sara went to her suite for a deep meditating soak. Meanwhile, Lindsay grabbed her yoga bag and headed over to the Burgundy suite. She dropped her bag by the chaise then headed into the bedroom. She was wearing her belt as well as a skirt and t-shirt along with tan stockings and heels. She placed the belt key on the bedside table along with

the keys for the cuffs and cage locks. Lindsay removed her heels and climbed into the cage then closing and locking the doors behind her. She put on the gag then took out the ankle shackles and found the middle link of the chain and connected via a small padlock to the high security handcuffs thus with her hands cuffed behind her back she'd be hogtied. Lindsay applied the cuffs and then tried to find a position which she could be somewhat comfortable in the cage. She found if she laid on her side she was somewhat comfortable. Lindsay had fallen asleep by the time Sara had made her way into the suite. Sara called out a couple times, "Lindsay!" Lindsay finally came to, a bit disoriented. Sara explained, "Sorry, I feel asleep for a bit in tub. Let me get you out of there."

Sara saw the keys on the table when she first walked in. She unlocked and opened the cage. Upon having her gag removed Lindsay asked, "What time is it?"

Sara replied handing her the keys, "A little after eight. Can you undo everything else on your own?"

Lindsay took the cuff keys told her, "Think so. Wow, so I was in here for over two hours. I must have fallen asleep pretty quick." Lindsay had herself out of the cuffs then stretched her legs in front of her, "Oye! Little stiff." She removed the ankle shackles then stood up and headed to the bathroom. She returned shortly, "So what do you want to do tonight?"

Sara yawned, "Oh sorry, don't get why I am so tired tonight. Let's get you out of that belt and then when can figure out what we are going to do tonight." Lindsay removed the belt and Sara joked, "No vibrating egg or anal plug this week?"

Lindsay giggled, "Wasn't sure how that was going to work out with me in the cage. It likely would have prevented me from falling asleep."

Wynn called out from the sitting room, "Sara! Lindsay! Ice cream and brandy on the counter. I'll see you two in the morning for Martina's Yoga Session."

Sara laughed, "Guess we will go have some ice cream and brandy while we figure out what we want to do this evening." Lindsay and Sara took their usual seats in the sitting room and had their ice cream and brandy. Sara suggested, "Why don't we just do the scarves tonight? Don't really feel like doing anything elaborate."

Lindsay agreed, "Works for me."

Monday afternoon Victoria called for Laura, "Everything is in order and the seller is ready to close when you are."

Laura told her, "Let me find out when we get a flight out here, plus when Kacie and Lindsay are ready too." Laura called over to The Budget Holstein and talked

to Kacie who told her they could leave Thursday and come back on Sunday. Laura came into my office and asked, "Can you find out if Marc can get us a flight Nashville on Thursday, returning Sunday for Kacie, Lindsay and myself?"

I called Marc and presented him with Laura's inquiry, "Looks like I can get them on a flight out of Deer Valley in mid-morning. Coming back, also Deer Valley looks like Sunday evening." Laura called Kacie back to confirm and was told those times would work which I relayed to Marc, "Okay, have her get in contact with me with to take care of payment."

Laura called Victoria, "So, the three of us can be out there Thursday afternoon."

Victoria confirmed, "That works. Call me when you leave and either Leslie or myself will get you from the airport."

Wednesday afternoon when Sara returned from work she asked me, "Is it okay if Kayré stays here while Kacie is gone with Lindsay and your sister?"

I told her, "That's fine. We can put her up in the Burgundy Suite since you and Lindsay won't be using it this weekend."

Thursday morning Wynn loaded Lindsay and Laura's bags into the Jeep and then they headed across the Pima Highway over to The Thirsty Cactus Budget Holstein to pickup Kacie. Wynn put Kacie's bag in the back with the rest. She got into the Jeep next to Lindsay, "Oh boy, we get to spend some time together. Hopefully Sara won't be jealous."

Lindsay giggled, "I don't think Sara will mind since she gets to spend time with Kayré."

Wynn arrived at Deer Valley Airport and found a baggage cart. She knew her way around the airport from the many times we've flown out of there. She led the three ladies to the charter terminal and told Laura, "Give me a call before y'all leave Nashville so I have an idea when you are do in. Also give me call once you landed and I'll head over."

Laura called Victoria to inform them they would be departing soon and she was told to call her again once they landed in Nashville. The three of them checked their bags and then boarded the plane. Laura commented to Lindsay, "This is weird, not having Sophie with me."

Lindsay asked, "Why didn't she come?"

Laura explained, "She is not going to be involved in this part of my life. Besides she is taking care of things with Miss Kitty and The Cheetah. Should have the

divorce finalized in the next week.”

They arrived in Nashville and Laura called Victoria who informed her, “I’m doing a showing soon, Leslie is on her way up and should be there by the time you get your bags. She said she’d call Lindsay once she gets to the airport. We’ll do the closing tomorrow morning, the title office is closing in about an hour anyway.”

Laura relayed the info, “Lindsay, Leslie will call you when she gets here, should be soon. Guess we are just going to the Farm House tonight as Victoria says too late in the day to do the closing.”

Lindsay looked at her watch and did the math, “Oh yeah, it is almost four in the afternoon and by the time we got into town it would be pretty close to five. I am guessing we will have dinner and get to spend sometime with the grand kids.” The three of them gathered their bags and waited. Lindsay’s phone rang and then she informed them, “Okay, Leslie is out front. Says she will be in big red Chevy truck.” The three of them head outside and saw Leslie in the Cheshire Farm’s 1989 Chevy Crew Cab pickup. They threw their bags into the bed and Lindsay climbed in up front next to Leslie, “This thing is old as I am!”

Leslie laughed, “Almost, closer to my age. Still runs great too. That’s the great thing about these old trucks, there was nothing fancy about them. Hell of lot less to go wrong and when something does it is easy to fix. It’s rush hour so it is going to be bit before we get back to the farm. Dave is making us dinner. Charlotte says the grand kids are all excited to see you again.” An hour later they arrived at the Farm House and Leslie took them inside, “Lindsay and Abby you two can stay in the same rooms as before. Kacie, you have a choice of two rooms.”

Leslie showed Kacie the two rooms, “They look almost identical. Suppose I’ll take this one here.”

Leslie told them, “Good choice! You’ve got about 10-minutes to freshen up. Meet you in the main house.”

The three of them headed to the main house and Charlotte greeted them, “Welcome back.” She saw Kacie, “Kacie let me introduce you to my husband Dave and our kids Dolly and Timmy.”

Kacie replied, “Hello. Thanks for having me.”

After dinner Leslie and Lindsay went out with the kids while Laura and Kacie helped Charlotte and Dave. Dave asked Kacie, “So what you do?”

Kacie explained, “I oversee the operations of the three...well soon to be four

'Holstein' stores."

Laura asked, "Aren't you the COO?"

Kacie laughed, "Yeah suppose that is my official title. Kind got thrown into all this after the Wal Mart fiasco a few years back."

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Back at the Sagebrush house Sara arrived back with Kayré. Sara showed her to the Burgundy Suite, "So this is where you will be for next few nights until they get back."

Kayré looked around, "Nice. I don't remember this when we were here before."

Sara told her, "It wasn't finished when we first moved in."

Kayré saw the cage, "Oh...nice cage. Can I play in that later?"

Sara laughed, "I bought it for Lindsay, but since she's not here no reason you cain't. Anyway, lets head down and see what Wynn has made for dinner." They headed downstairs to find Wynn had made burgers. After dinner Sara put Kacie in the cage while she took a soak in the Burgundy Suite tub. Sara came out the bathroom wearing stockings and a robe. Before she removed Kayré from the cage she went over to the closet and grabbed a couple silk scarves. After placing the scarves on the bed she released Kayré from the cage and told her, "Strip down to your stockings and get on the bed." Kayré did as she was told. Sara turned off the lights in the sitting room as well as the stair lights before returning to the suite and shutting the doors. She removed her robe setting it on a near by chair before hopping on the bed. She handed Kayré a scarf and told her, "Face me, then put this around your eyes." Sara turned off the lights then put her scarf over her eyes. She reached out to Kayré and the two girls spent the rest of the evening feeling and kissing each other.

—

The next morning after breakfast Victoria came and took Laura and Kacie to the title agency to handle the final paperwork for the closing. A couple hours and dozens of documents signed later Victoria handed Laura the keys, "Congratulations, it is yours! I'll take you over there shortly. Lindsay and Leslie will met us there."

They arrived at the store front and Kacie was excited, "Oh wow, this is a dream location. You are right in the downtown and have tons of foot traffic. This is what Thirsty Cactus should've been, but Scottsdale kept scaling back what was allowed

in the development. So the top floor is a residence?"

Victoria confirmed, "Yes it is."

Kacie asked, "Is the entire building on a single utility?"

Victoria was not sure what she was asking, "How do you mean?"

Kacie rephrased her question, "Is the residence and the storefront on a single meter for the utilities?"

Victoria checked her notes, "Um....good question. I don't know..."

Laura commented, "When I set the utility account they asked me if it was for the first or second floor, I told them both."

They had gone inside then out to the back. Victoria noticed there were two electric meters, "Okay two power meters, but appears to be one gas, which is normal for these buildings. Also, normally only there is one water/sewer connection."

Kacie asked Victoria, "Can you send me the information for the electric provider? As per the terms of the franchise agreement, we pay the electric for the stores, not the store manager. Since gas and water/sewer are on a single meter Laura you will be responsible for those."

Victoria commented, "Makes sense as about 90% of that usage is going to be from the residence. Of course in the winter months you will be using the gas radiators and fireplaces."

Kacie added, "Yeah it is kind of a weird situation there. We have the same setup at The Thirsty Cactus store. Kayré and I pay for the electricity for our residence and then water/sewer for the whole building."

Laura didn't seem to care either way, "Whatever works. We better head back inside if Lindsay and Leslie are coming."

The three of them went back in and short time later Leslie and Lindsay were at the front entrance. Lindsay walked inside and looked around, "Oh so empty! Looks like a decent amount of space here. What do you think Kacie, about the same size as Superstition Mountain?"

Kacie asked, "Victoria what is the square footage of the retail space?" Victoria reviewed her notes and gave her the number, "Hmm...I think it is slightly larger than Gold Canyon. Abby, have you made any arrangements yet on getting a cash

wrap counter and fixtures?"

Laura sighed, "Um...no. I've been try to figure out the network layout, haven't even given thought to that part yet."

Leslie told her, "Victoria and I know some people near town who might be able to help you out."

Victoria replied, "Oh yeah Buck Henderson has a bunch of salvage at his place up near Nashville. You should be able to find a cash wrap counter there, might need a little TLC..."

Leslie added, "I've done a lot of furniture refinishing in my years, especially those final couple years out in Boston when he was kissing ass at his precious law firm. I can help you out there. As far as fixtures go, I'll make some calls."

Kacie asked Laura, "So Abby when do you plan on opening?"

Laura looked at her blankly, "I have no clue. I don't know how long things are going to take. Hell I am not even sure when we are going to move in upstairs. I'm sorry..." She was trying to calm herself down.

Kacie realized she was overwhelming Laura and reminded her, "It is okay. Remember, I am here to help you get started. I wasn't sure if you had a specific date in mind you wanted to open."

Laura regained herself, "I know; I know; I know; Just so lost not having Sophie here. Opening day? Around say may be...Thanksgiving?"

Kacie told her, "That is doable in regards to getting merchandise...which is another subject we need to discuss."

Leslie explained, "Abby and I have discussed this already and I have a fairly good idea what she could carry for this market."

Kacie replied, "Okay, that was easy. The three of us will need to discuss in more detail. Perhaps later today or tomorrow?"

Leslie added, "On the subject of tomorrow, that would be a good time for you to meet Miranda and for you to determine if she is going to be a good fit as your operations manager. The inventory we can go over once we get back to the farm house this afternoon after lunch."

Laura asked, "How the fu...I mean heck...am I suppose to know if she is going to be a good fit?"

Lindsay giggled, "Oh no...Laura's evil twin is coming out!"

Laura turned to Lindsay, "Oh please! I'll have you know that I never cussed when I was at the resort..well except when I was in my office with the door closed."

Leslie explained, "May be we all meet tomorrow for lunch across the street at Taylor's Bakery. Miranda can explain what she can do for you. See how you two get along with each other."

Lindsay reminded her, "That is very important because your operations manager is your 'first officer' and handles the day to day operations of your store." Pointing to Kacie, "and deals with her so you don't have to!"

Kacie joked, "And we all know how difficult I am to work with!"

Victoria told us, "It is getting close to lunch. How about we go over to the Grill at the end of the row?"

-

During lunch Laura got to thinking about the other furniture she needed and called me, "Hey, Ron the place you bought your furniture are they in other parts of the country?"

I explained, "They will deliver anywhere in the US, but let me look..." I checked and found they had a store in Nashville, "Yes, they are up in Nashville, I'll send you the address. How is everything going?"

Laura told me, "Not too bad. Closed on the building today. We're having lunch right now. Suppose to meet the lady Leslie is recommending for my operations manager tomorrow. I think Leslie and Kacie want to discuss the product line with me this afternoon. It is coming along, just a lot of moving parts. Funny thing is I've been more focused on setting up the network for this building than everything else that I need to do...such as fixtures and merchandise. It's hard not having Sophie with me, but that is why I need an operations manager to handle the store. I'll be okay."

I reminded her, "If you need me out there for anything let me know."

Laura was relieved to hear my offer and as much as she would liked to have me there now, there was no need, "Thanks. Good to know. Next time I come back out here will be when I move out here. I'll need your assistance in getting the computers and network installed."

I laughed, "Wow, just like old times! Yeah, I should be able to come out. No use dragging Andy or Wynn out with me. The two of us should be able to handle it."

Laura was grateful, "Thanks, that means a lot!"

—

After lunch Leslie took Lindsay, Kacie and Laura back to the farm house. Leslie went over her product line selections with Kacie and Laura. Kacie took notes and would check the inventories later on to see if they had excess of some of the products at the other locations. Whatever more they needed she would order from the vendors. Leslie made a couple phone calls and told Laura, "So, I talked to Buck and he has a few counters you can choose from. Beware he is a tough negotiator! We can go over there tomorrow morning before we meet Miranda at Taylor's Bakery for lunch. From what he has told me, should be able to fit it in the back of our truck. Still, need to check a couple more leads I have for fixtures."

Kacie advised her, "Worse case scenario we could always order some."

Lindsay asked, "What happened to all the old fixtures from the Scottsdale store?"

Kacie replied, "Miss Holstein sold those to the new owner of the location."

I had sent Laura the Nashville location of my furniture store earlier, she was checking the time when she saw my text. She asked Leslie, "Sorry to pester you, was wondering if you or Charlotte could take me here on Sunday? Need to get furniture selected and ordered for our new place."

Leslie looked at my message, "Oh okay. Never worked with them, but heard they are good."

Laura explained, "They have locations outside of Phoenix where Ron bought most of the furnishing for his house, including the rocking chairs on the porch."

Leslie told her, "Yeah, I think I can do that....hmm...may be I can convince Dave and Charlotte to get some rocking chairs for our porch!"

Laura laughed, "There you go. Suppose I better make note of the address of the building...which reminds me." She remembered she needed to let Sir Finley know her address to have the cage shipped. She sent Sir Finley a text with her Tennessee address.

Leslie informed the three of them, "Getting close to dinner and I need to head back to the main house and help out Charlotte. We should have dinner ready in about half hour." During dinner Leslie confirmed, "Buck Henderson is expecting us tomorrow morning. I told Miranda to meet us at Taylor's Cafe for lunch. I heard back from one of my contacts in regards to fixtures and they will send me some picture in the morning."

Chapter 13: Picking, Hunting, Shopping and an Unlikely Interview

The next morning Kacie stayed with Charlotte and Dave spending some time playing with the grand kids. Leslie took Lindsay and Laura out to Buck Henderson's property. Leslie joked, "He's a little rough around the edges, but his bark is worse than his bite!" They arrived at his property and Leslie was surprised, "Wow, this place has grown since I last came here. Alright let me go find him." Leslie went into the building and yelled out, "BUCK! You hidin' in here?"

Buck who looked like he stepped out of a western with his long beard, faded flannel shirt, boots and hat yelled back, "Leslie McKee, that you?" He walked out towards the door, "Well, I'll be dang...haven't seen you since you left for New York with that fancy lawyer husband of yours!"

Leslie laughed and correct him, "Actually it was Boston...anyway the 'fancy lawyer' and I have divorced. Came back to Franklin a couple months ago. Moved in with my daughter and her husband. Helping them out with the kids and the cafe."

Buck laughed, "Well good for you; I never really much cared for him much. Always seemed like he had a stick up his ass!"

Leslie agreed, "Well, he did! So anyway, I am here with my sister who is helping out a friend of hers who is opening a store in downtown across from Taylor's."

Buck remembered, "Yeah, yeah....you did mention somethin' about needing a counter? Well bring them on over, I won't bite...may be."

Leslie laughed and went back to the front and called out for Lindsay and Laura. "Buck, this is my younger sister Lindsay and Laura is a family friend who is opening the store. So what do you have to show us?"

Buck being a true gentlemen tipped his hat and bowed to Lindsay and Laura,

"Ladies! Follow me and make sure you leave some bread crumbs so you find your way back!" Buck led them deep into the building into a room with several different counters, "Here we are."

Laura really had no idea, "Lindsay I am going to defer this to you..."

Lindsay understood, "Okay. So, I am going to design the layout of the rest of your store around the cash wrap counter we choose." She looked around, "So many choices!" She came across one that was a good size but a bit rough, "I like the size of this one, but boy has it seen some use."

Buck joked, "It's called patina sweetheart! It adds character."

Leslie reminded her, "We aren't in Scottsdale; this is not a brand new building so you don't need something pristine. This is actually a really nice solid piece and goes well for this area. Needs a little TLC, but nothing I can't handle. Buck how much for this one?"

Buck threw a number to 'see if it would stick', "Three-hundred."

Leslie shot back, "You're crazy old man. I shouldn't go over one-fifty!"

Buck countered, "I've got more than that into it!"

Leslie called his bluff, "HA! I highly doubt that Buck, this looks like it has been sitting here untouched since the day you hauled out what ever abandoned building you found it in."

Buck laughed, "Damn, you didn't lose your knack when you went to New York..." Leslie reminded him it was Boston, "...New York, Boston all the same them there fancy big cities. Since I like you: two-hundred take it or leave it."

Leslie turned to Laura, "You heard him, give him the cash before he changes his mind!" She turned her attention back to Buck, "You are going to help me load this and don't tell me that's extra?"

Buck accepted the cash from Laura and admitted his defeat, "Dang nab-it! I was going to make you carry it out."

Leslie laughed, "Sure you were. I'll give you a little extra for your troubles!"

After moving several other pieces out of the way Buck was able to move the counter outside. As they were heading out Lindsay spotted a hat display rack. She called out, "Hey Buck!"

Buck was not sure what she wanted, "What!?"

Lindsay asked, "Why didn't you tell us you had these hat display racks?"

Buck replied back, "You never asked!" Buck walked back into the building and found Lindsay, "Well, hell I forgot I even had those. Make me an offer."

Lindsay turned to her sister who told him, "Fifty."

Buck was about to complain, "You going to send me to the poor house...nah. Fifty is fine, like I said didn't even know those were there. But I ain't carrying those out!"

Leslie giggled, "Fair enough. Laura give the man fifty and a 'tip'. Lindsay grab your hat racks."

Buck helped them load the counter and Lindsay put her hat racks into the bed of the truck as well. Leslie told Buck, "See that wasn't so bad. Cleared you a little space so you can add more stuff. Do you know anyone in or around town who might be selling or wanting to offload shoe and clothing display racks?"

Buck thought for a moment, "I know a guy but he is out on the other side of Nashville. He salvaged a bunch of those type of display racks from buildings going to be demoed or closed businesses. Of course that was a couple years back. I'll have to dig up his number and give him a call. Would you mind giving me your number so I can let you know."

Laura commented, "We leave tomorrow and I have things to do before we leave."

Leslie gave Buck her number and told Laura, "I'll take care of everything. If he does have the displays you can pay me when you come back. Leave me a key so I can stash them in the store. Plus I will want to refinish your counter." She looked at her phone and commented, "Speaking of time, we need to head back to the store and unload this stuff then meet Miranda at Taylor's."

Buck assured her, "I'll let you know one way or another in a couple days. You take care now and don't be running off to New York again...oh that's right it was Boston!"

Leslie assured Buck, "I have no desire to go back there...nor did I have any to go there in the first place!"

The three of them headed back to Laura's store and they unloaded the counter just setting it along with the hat display racks inside the back door. Her phone dinged with a text, "Ah. Okay Charlotte is going to bring Kacie over to Taylor's."

We should head over there now; not sure if Miranda is there or not." The three of them headed across the street to Taylor's and walked in to see the place was mostly empty. Leslie commented, "The lull between breakfast and lunch."

Taylor greeted them, "Hey Leslie, Charlotte said you and your sister and..."

Laura replied, "Laura."

Taylor laughed, "Oh yeah. Sorry about that. I'll get to know you soon enough. Anyway she said y'all be coming and have a couple more people join you."

Leslie told her, "Yeah, Charlotte is bringing Kacie who oversees all the 'Holstein' stores and then Miranda is suppose to join us as well."

Taylor told her, "Okay, I'll make sure they find y'all when they arrive. Follow me." Taylor led them towards the back to a large booth in a quiet corner.

Laura commented, "Well, it's coming together...slowly. So many moving parts. The next time I am out here I am bring Sophie with me and Ron as well."

Lindsay reminded her, "I'll be coming out with you again as well. Need to help setup your store and I'll even stick around a few days to help you and your team out."

Charlotte and Kacie arrived. Charlotte asked, "So how did it go with Old Man Buck?"

Leslie laughed, "The old hoot hasn't changed! We got a couple hat display racks and a counter which I need to work my magic on. He says he knows a guy out on the other side of Nashville who had cleared out some display racks from an old department store slated for demolition. He wasn't sure what his friend had or even still does. I gave him my number and he said he let me know in a couple days."

Taylor came over with an older lady with short light blond hair, "Leslie, the rest of your party is here."

Leslie saw Miranda, "Miranda come join us. Let me introduce you to the others." She started with Lindsay, "This is my younger sister Lindsay McGrawl; Kacie O'Neil who oversees the operations of all the 'Holstein' stores. Finally Laura or Abby Merlot who is opening the store across the street here."

Miranda replied, "Nice to meet you all, Miranda Morgan. I handle administrative operations at The Cheshire Farms Cafe and Country Store. Mostly work with their vendors to insure we are getting all the food and products needed."

Laura replied nervously, "Um okay. I am still not really sure what I need of you...I mean I know I need an operations manager, but don't know..."

Lindsay jumped in, "That's okay Abby, I'll explain. So I am the operations manager for The Budget Holstein store in Scottsdale, Arizona. Abby is opening her own smaller Boutique version of the store across the street. We specialize in clothing including hats, corsets, dresses, shoes/boots as well as leather and in the case of Abby's store denim. So my responsibilities are keeping on top of our inventory; being a liaison between *our* vendors and Kacie. In the beginning you are likely going to carrying much of the same products from our already established vendors. Leslie and Kacie have already worked out the initial product offerings which likely will be tweaked as you get a better idea of what sells or doesn't. You will be working with Kacie to restock those products. But, at some point you are going to discover your own local vendors with whom you will want to carry their products. While all three of our Arizona stores do carry a lot of the same products, each store does have a few unique products which only that location carries. This is partly due to some pesky county restrictions plus some of the vendors prefer we only sell within their home market. So as an operations manager you will meet/recruit these vendors and negotiate an agreement to carry their products. Once that is done, then you will relay their information to Kacie and she will take care of getting them paid. For example our Superstition Mountain store is a few miles from the Arizona Reinsurance Festival grounds. When the festival was in town that store's operations manager discovered a couple vendors with products we felt were a good match for that store. One vendor was fine with us selling her products at all three stores, but the other asked to only sell at the Superstition Mountain store as she is based in that area and wanted to stay local."

Miranda understood, "Okay, so am I the one who would be negotiating and/or seeking out vendors?"

Kacie replied, "Yes. So, if you find a local vendor you want to carry their products, you will work out the terms with them and then send me their contact information so they can be paid. You may or may not choose to inform them of the three Arizona stores. It maybe something you would discuss with them in the future, if you do develop a solid relationship. Scottsdale's market is somewhat similar to that out here. Oro Valley and Gold Canyon aka Superstition Mountain are bit different."

Lindsay added, "Also understand you are not always going to be 'behind the scenes'. You will be interacting with customers as a sales persons. You may even develop relationships with some customers where they may want to work with you. The same goes for Leslie and Abby, they may have customers who prefer to work with them. I have a couple customers in Scottsdale who work with me if I

am available. Sara, my co-worker in Scottsdale she has a client who only wants to work with her and will frequently calls in asking when Sara is available so her and/or her daughters can have their own personal shopper.”

Kacie added, “Sara's situation is little more unusual. This particular customer is a premier client whom I 'pawed off' to Sara because I didn't want to deal with her. Not one of my finest moments, but thankfully in the end it worked out...otherwise Miss Holstein would likely had me hung....of course her daughter who is my partner might...sorry rambling.”

Miranda explained, “So I used to work for an independent department store out in Memphis and was kind of the same deal. I had customers who would ask for me whenever they came in. But, I really never had anyone who wanted to only work with me.”

Lindsay laughed, “You'd be surprised, I was when I ended up with my own premier client. One more thing, on Sundays Kacie and sometime Kayré too will hold a weekly conference call with the operations manager of the three stores. We do this call around 11:00 AM Arizona time. The call lasts about a half hour to an hour.”

Kacie added, “Most of the time, sometimes we go a little longer depending on what is going on. Prior to call Kayré and I look at the sales reports and inventory reports for the three stores. I will usually email an agenda about 20-minutes prior once I know what I want to discuss. However, the bulk of the call are for the operations managers to address or discuss any issues they are having. I should also mention if Abby does choose to have you as her operations manager I will be around the first couple weeks. Lindsay plans on returning here about a week prior to opening to help get the store setup. She did the setup for Superstition Mountain as well as Thirsty Cactus our newer Scottsdale location....”

Laura added, “Ron said he would come out as well, to help me get the network and POS setup. Going back to our roots, when we used to installs in the evenings while we were both at The University.”

Miranda asked, “Who is Ron?”

Laura explained, “Ron Merlot, my younger brother and Sara's husband.”

Kacie continued, “Good to know, glad you have that part worked out as about all I know how to do is setup and configure Square. Anyway, when Abby and Lindsay and Ron come back out, I will too. I would be training you, Leslie and Abby, plus anyone else you bring on. I would also be sticking around during the opening week just to help you out.”

Lindsay added, "Same here."

Kacie asked Laura, "Abby, what do you want to do?"

Laura replied, "Well, I am flying dark here and sounds like there is a lot more to the store than I realized. I was silent partner with Miss Kitty at The Oro Valley store..."

Kacie reminded her, "Technically you still are....in fact that is something I need to discuss with you later."

Laura was not sure what Kacie meant, "Um...okay. Plus Sophie won't be handling this part of my life, in fact she won't even be involved with the store. I guess she is going to working at Leslie's daughter's cafe?"

Leslie confirmed and told Miranda, "Yes she will. You may have seen her Miranda, a couple months back, she had the purple hair."

Laura added, "Not any more, she shaved most of it off. So...um...back to your question Kacie....Yes, let's do this."

Kacie asked Miranda, "Will this work for you?"

Miranda replied, "I think so. Like I said, I have retail clothing background. Plus you and Lindsay will be able to assist me in the beginning until I get a better understanding of everything. When would I be starting?"

Kacie laughed, "Now that is a good question. We don't really have a timeline yet. I believe Abby has mentioned she was looking to open before Thanksgiving."

Laura reminded her, "I am still not sure. I am just trying to get everything figured out. I mean I just closed on the building yesterday. I am not even sure when I'll be back here. The three of us are heading back to Arizona tomorrow. I still have some personal business I need to take care of back in Arizona."

Miranda told her, "I'm flexible, just let me know when you are near."

Laura advised them, "Once we get back to Arizona and I see how things are progressing I may have a better idea."

Kacie in an effort to nudge her, "I am going to order the clothing when we get back. Takes about three weeks."

Laura told her, "Well, I hope to have moved out here before then. Don't think we'll be ready to open the store yet then."

Lindsay laughed, "Hell no! Getting Gold Canyon ready in two days was a pain in the ass....and the rest of my body for that matter!"

Kacie giggled, "I remember that...of course that was more because Miss Holstein could not commit to an opening date."

Lindsay added, "Much like she couldn't with the Thirsty Cactus store. It is wonder she ever opened any of her stores."

Kacie explained, "Well, Oro Valley she always given her full attention. Kayré jokes Miss Holstein gave the store more attention then her when she was growing up. Making me COO was suppose to eliminate those issues, but she has a hard time of letting go of control."

Laura commented, "Well, now that she is retired may be things will be easier."

Kacie laughed, "Eh...don't count on it. Okay, Miranda; Abby and I will be in contact with you once we know more." Miranda thanked them and headed out. Leslie went to take care of the check. Lindsay and Charlotte followed. Laura was about to leave when Kacie told her, "Hold up Abby. I need to discuss the matter of your investment in the Oro Valley store."

Laura had forgotten she put money into that store, "Oh crap. I didn't disclose that to The Cheetah...fuck."

Kacie told her, "That could be a problem. Since you are no longer going to be involved with Oro Valley, we would buy out your shares. You will need to work that out with your attorney and Lynette."

Laura sighed, "Great something else I need to do. I so wish Sophie was here."

The next morning Leslie took Laura into to town to the furniture store. For now she ordered the basics, a couple beds, some living room furniture and bar stools. She setup for delivery in about two and half weeks as she figured she should be moving in by then. Leslie purchased a few rocking chairs for the farm house and barn porches then had gone over to the in store Cafe while Laura was shopping. Her phone dinged with a message from Buck telling her to expect a call from 'his guy' in regards to the display racks. A short time later her phone rang, "Leslie McKee." Buck's guy explained what he had and where. Leslie told him, "I am kind of busy these next couple days, but should be able to get out there later next week."

Laura wrapped up her purchase and found Leslie, "That's done. Delivery is in 2 ½ weeks hope I am in by then."

Leslie reminded her, "I have a key, so worse case scenario I can do a video call with you when they deliver your furniture."

Laura replied, "Good to know."

Leslie added, "I heard from Buck's 'guy' and he told me what he had. I'll get out there later next week and take a look. I'll do a video call. Okay, so we still need to get you back to the Farm House so you can pack up. Y'all flight leaves in four hours."

Laura was appreciative, "Thanks for taking care of all this for me."

Leslie told her, "No problem. Gives me an opportunity to spend time with my sister. Even if our parents screwed us apart."

Laura laughed, "Yeah I can relate. Our father never approved of me being a lesbian. Never knew what our mother saw in him...of course he did knock her up before they were married...water under the bridge."

The two of them headed back to the farm house. A couple hours later Laura, Lindsay and Kacie were ready to go. Leslie dropped them off at the airport. Lindsay called Wynn to inform them they would be boarding soon. A few hours later they arrived back at Deer Valley. Kacie went to get their bags while Lindsay called Wynn again. An hour later Wynn called Lindsay to inform them she was waiting. After they were on the road Wynn told Laura, "Miss Kitty was trying to reach you..."

Laura replied, "Yeah, didn't bring a charger. What did she want?"

Wynn told her, "She wouldn't go into details with me, but said you need to contact The Cheetah on Monday morning."

Laura was beginning to realize her investment was going to be a problem, "Yeah....I kind of figured." After dinner Laura called Miss Kitty, "I'm back in Arizona. Sorry, I had forgotten about the investment I made at The Oro Valley Budget Holstein."

Miss Kitty admitted, "Same here. I didn't even know about until I started asking Sophie. So what happens with that now?"

Laura told her, "Kacie said they will buy out my share. We need to figure out what we want to do with that then let our attorney know."

Miss Kitty asked, "Do you know how much and when?"

Laura explained, "No, I do not. Doubt Kacie does either. Thinking we are going to be dependent on Linda. Which means my moving in 2 ½ weeks may not happen. I'll talk to Kacie tomorrow. She already went back home with Kayré."

Chapter 14: But The Show Must Go On and Kinky Secrets!

Monday morning Laura called Kacie, "So, the divorce settlement is on hold until I can tell our attorney what the amount will be and when you would pay me out."

Kacie explained, "I texted Miss Holstein last night and she told me she does not know the exact amount as the company value has increased since your investment back then. She will not be able to find that out until she meets with the company accountant and that can not happen until she gets back to Arizona the end of next week. Even then she thinks it will be a few more days for them to liquidate funds in order to disburse your share."

Laura was frustrated, but knew it was not Kacie's fault, "Oh okay...that sucks as means I won't be able to move out to Tennessee until this all settles. Suppose gives me more time to get some other stuff in order."

Kacie was relieved Laura didn't bite her head off, "Appreciate your understanding. It is annoying for me as well, as this should've been something I could have taken care of as COO, but Miss Holstein never put that in motion. She will go forward, but I know that doesn't help you at the moment. While on the subject of more time, it appears the corset maker has a backlog at the moment and is running 2-3 weeks out. I'll let you know when I get notified of when they ship our order. Oh, do me a favor, ask Ron to set up Miranda with an account so I can start emailing her details."

Laura replied, "Okay, will do. Need to call Miss Kitty next and let her know what's going on." She wrapped up with Kacie and then called Miss Kitty and informed her of the delays, "Sorry, I just had forgotten about that Sophie and I had bought into the Budget Holstein when you started."

Miss Kitty understood, but was surprised, "That's alright. I was not aware Sophie had also put in her money. I was under the impression it was just you and I."

Laura explained, "She fronted me the funds for about half of my share. I didn't have much money at that time having just bought the house in Marana and we had not sold the Henderson condo yet."

Miss Kitty replied, "Ah, that makes sense. Okay, I'll relay the info over to the Cheetah. Keep me posted."

Laura replied, "Sounds good, I need to talk to Ron." She wrapped up with Miss Kitty and headed to my office. She knocked on my door and since I wasn't working on anything at the moment, I motioned for her to come in. Laura closed the door behind her and inquired, "I am interrupting anything?"

I explained, "Nope, just browsing the job boards at the moment. Not too much to bid on right now, but then again it is Monday morning. What's going on?"

Laura told me, "Ran into some problems with the divorce. I had forgotten when I moved out here Sophie fronted me some money for me to pay for my share into The Budget Holstein. The Cheetah can not continue until we know how much I am going to get back when Linda buys out my share. Of course, Linda can not do anything until she meets with the company accountant when she gets back from where ever she is."

I told her, "Yeah, she is in San Francisco until the end of the month. So what does this mean for you?"

Laura replied, "I can not move to Tennessee until this all said and done."

I reminded her, "Thou shall not fall."

Laura added, "The delay gives me more time to get stuff taken care of with the store. No idea what...oh Kacie asked me to ask you to setup Miranda with an account...something about Miranda being able to access email."

I told her, "I can do that, but....she is going to need something to access said email on. Suppose the same is going to apply for Leslie and you as well. Hmm....I really didn't want to get Wynn involved in this, but things are starting to get complicated." I paged Wynn to my office and waited a couple minutes; she did not show, "Well, either she went to the market or is in cleaning mode. Though I doubt the latter being as today is Monday and she cleaned the house yesterday after Kayré left."

Laura added, "I haven't seen her since right after breakfast when she was loading the dishwasher."

I told her, "Okay, she likely went to the market. If you can, go leave her note on the fridge to come see me."

Laura replied, "I do that. Think I'll go take a walk, need to clear my head." She left my office and went into the kitchen. She found a post it note and wrote 'See Ron' then stuck it to the fridge. She headed out the backdoor and took a long walk around the neighborhood.

A few minutes later Wynn came back and once she finished unloading the groceries came into my office holding Laura's note, "You wanted to see me?"

I explained, "Yeah....um...it is about Laura's store...and she went for a walk while waiting for you to get back." I filled Wynn in on the discussion Laura and I had earlier. "At this point, I am wondering if we should order some phones, iPads and laptops?"

Wynn asked, "How about Square? She could work on getting her image created."

I told her, "She is going to use the base Budget Holstein image. Kacie will take care of the inventory portion of that store."

Wynn forgot that Laura was still part of Budget Holstein, "Oh okay, forgot about that."

I asked Wynn, "Can you check lead times for laptops, iPads and phones?"

Wynn told me, "Let me go get my tablet. Be right back." She returned a couple minutes later, "If we order by Noon...oh wait that's eastern time...looks like Thursday as would be 2-day shipping..." The door bell chimed, "You expecting anyone?"

I replied, "That's probably Laura. If it is bring her back in here."

Wynn went to the front door and discovered it was indeed Laura, "Ah good you've returned. Ron wants to talk to you."

They came into my office and I told them, "It might be easier to have Leslie and Miranda come out here."

Wynn commented, "It would also give Miranda an opportunity to see a live store."

I told her, "Very true. Let me give Leslie a call and see what we can do. Laura, who else is going to be working at your store?"

Laura told me, "Besides Leslie and Miranda, I do not know at this point. Sorry, I can not be more helpful."

I assured her, "That's fine. Wynn for now order three each laptop, iPads and phones. When Laura is ready to add more people we can get the equipment then. I am going to call Leslie and see when they can come out." Laura and Wynn left my office and I called Leslie, "Leslie, Ron Merlot here. So Kacie is wanting to get you and Miranda setup for the store. We will issue each of you a laptop, phone and iPad. I think it will be easier to get you setup out here. Plus Miranda can see

a live Holstein store. Any idea if you two can come out here?"

Leslie told me, "Miranda is more flexible than I am. I have some things I am needing to take care of on Wednesday in regards to Abby's store. We could come out say Thursday and stay the weekend?"

I told her, "That can work. Um....since Abby is staying with us I only have one guest suite free. So either you and Miranda can share the bed or one of you can sleep on the chaise lounge in the sitting room."

Leslie informed me, "Miranda and I use to travel a lot and have slept in the same bed many of times so not an issue. I'll confirm with Miranda about coming out Thursday then take care of the air travel."

I added, "Let me know. I'll have Wynn and Lindsay meet you." Later that day Leslie confirmed her and Miranda would be coming in Thursday afternoon. During dinner I announced, "Leslie and Miranda will be coming out Thursday through Sunday. They will be staying up in the Burgundy Suite so Sara and Lindsay you won't be able to use it this Friday. Also on Friday, Miranda can spend some time at the Thirsty Cactus Store."

Lindsay asked, "Why are they coming here?"

I explained, "Kacie wants me to get them setup for the new store, which means creating LDAP and email accounts, plus issue them each a phone, iPad and laptop."

Wednesday morning Leslie did a video call with Laura at Buck's guy's place, "He's got a lot of stuff here? What do you think?"

Laura was in the studio and replied, "Dear I have no idea. You'd be better asking your sister. Even so, I don't know when I am going to get to open now as the divorce settlement is on hold until I can get some matters that I am involved with at the Oro Valley store resolved. That can not begin until Miss Holstein comes back and my understanding is she won't be back until next Sunday."

Leslie chatted with Buck's guy off camera and then told her, "He says he doesn't expect this stuff to be going anywhere soon, if anything he may get more stuff. So may be will wait until you come back with Lindsay. Anyway, I'll see you tomorrow evening."

I could sense Laura was getting frustrated with everything that was going on currently. Marc had given me voucher packages for Prescott and Sedona in the past mainly for Sara and I. We've never really used them being were both so busy. I called Laura and Sophie into my office, "You two could use a break from

everything. I have package vouchers from Marc good for one night hotel and three dining vouchers in Prescott or Sedona. Which would you two want to go?"

Laura was grateful for a chance to get away and asked Sophie, "Where would you like to go?"

Sophie told her, "I've been to Sedona, but never been to Prescott."

I told them, "I like Prescott as it is not as crowded and usually a lot cheaper than Sedona. Just beware this time of year it gets cold fast at night." I handed Laura the vouchers for Prescott, "Check-in is at four. Go have fun and we'll see you for dinner tomorrow night. I thinking we are going to do Vinnie's."

Laura took the vouchers, "Thanks. It will be nice for us to spend some time away. Hmm...since we are going to have guests may be I'll make our mother's chicken enchiladas on Friday. I'll have to have Wynn help me out again."

I told her, "That sounds good. Suppose I could do Salmon on Saturday."

Thursday morning Lindsay asked Wynn, "What time are we suppose to leave to get Miranda and Leslie?"

Wynn told her, "They are due in around 2:00 PM so a little after 1:00 PM. Why?"

Lindsay replied, "Miss Womack messaged me last night. I meeting her around 11:00 so that should work. I'll grab a ride in with Sara this morning. Suppose I can go over to Starbucks when I am done with Miss Womack for lunch. Can you pick me up there?"

Wynn confirmed, "Sure I can come get you at the Starbucks on our way to the airport." Lindsay and Sara left together while Andy took off for Fountain Hills for a mid-morning staff meeting. Wynn informed me, "I am going to clean up the Burgundy Suite just as soon as I get these dishes done, need anything before I start?"

I told her, "Nope, should be good. Suppose I should get to work as well. It's Thursday, hopefully the job boards are a bit more active today. Been a very slow week and no clue as to why."

Wynn left to take care of the breakfast dishes then clean up the Burgundy suite. Shortly before 1:00 she came into my office in a short purple long sleeve dress with nude fishnet stocking and high heels, "Going to pick up Lindsay then get Leslie and Miranda at the airport. Have you checked the tracking for the equipment lately?"

I went back to my email and explained, "Yeah, Road Runner sent me an email showing delivery was 'on-time' and expected by 8:00 PM tonight."

Wynn sighed, "That narrows things down." She met up with Lindsay who was still wearing a pink Budget Holstein hoodie over her corset along with a plaid skirt and blackout tights paired with ankle boots.

Once she stepped outside she removed the hoodie and tossed it into the back seat of the Jeep before climbing in next to Wynn, "Warmed up nicely, though Starbucks was in deep freeze."

Wynn laughed, "Yeah, Sprouts is usually that way too. The Market is not so bad. How did it go with Miss Womack?"

Lindsay told her, "Small sale around \$300, she has a charity event she is going to this weekend. Works out to around \$60 commission, not that I really need the money with Andy and Sara taking care of most anything I need. Well, I did buy my own lunch at Starbucks..."

They arrived at the airport and Wynn dropped off Lindsay who grabbed and put back on the hoodie. Wynn left the arrivals curb then headed to the cell phone lot. Lindsay made her way to the American Airlines area and waited for her sister and Miranda. Half hour later Leslie and Miranda came out and Leslie seeing Lindsay, "That is a bright shirt!"

Lindsay laughed, "Yes, it is! It's Martina's, she left it at the house one Saturday after yoga. Been meaning to return it to her."

Miranda asked, "Who is Martina?"

Leslie told her, "I believe she is Ron's ex-wife?"

Lindsay laughed, "Yeah. Guess her and Laura had fling while they were married. But, then that was not the reason they divorced."

Miranda sounding like a broken record, "Who is Laura?"

Lindsay told her, "Oh you don't know. It's Abby. Her full name is Abigail Lauren Merlot. She hates being called Abigail and since their mother's name is Lorena, she normally goes by Laura. However, I think when she went to work at the Ritz there was another Laura in the IT Department so she adopted Abby."

Miranda commented, "Ah okay, I do recall now when you introduced her. Just got so use to y'all calling her Abby."

Lindsay laughed, "Understandable. Just habit for me to call her Laura as that was she went by when I first met her. Anyway do y'all have any other baggage?" Leslie confirmed they did not, "Okay let me call Wynn and let her know we are on our way out." As they walked out the terminal Lindsay called Wynn. A few minutes later Wynn pulled up in the Jeep. Lindsay told Miranda, "Go ahead and take the front seat next to Wynn; my sister and I will sit in the back."

Lindsay put their bags in the rear while Leslie got into the rear and Miranda in the front seat. She saw Wynn and introduced herself, "Hello. Miranda Morgan, so you are the famous Wynn!"

Wynn laughed, "I suppose I am." After Lindsay got back in she advised them, "Going to be an about hour and half for us to get back to the house. Some type of 'incident' on the 51 so going to have to take the long way home."

Upon arriving back Lindsay showed Leslie and Miranda the suite. Leslie commented, "I don't recall this from the last time Charlotte and I were here."

Lindsay told her, "I don't think Ron had it finished yet. Anyway dinner will be about another hour once Andy and Sara get back. Not sure if Laura and Sophie are back yet. I'll be downstairs if you need me."

After Lindsay left Leslie and Miranda looked around the suite. Miranda opened the closet and saw the cage, "They have a cage in here! Too bad it is locked."

Leslie looked at the other side of the closet which contained all the fetish clothing, most of which I had obtained from Gary, "Interesting collection of clothing in here too. I suppose we should head back downstairs. I'll introduce you to Ron, Abby's brother."

They headed downstairs and into the foyer. Leslie saw Wynn, but not Lindsay she asked, "Is Lindsay around?"

Wynn told her, "She went back to her room."

Leslie replied, "Okay. Ron in his office?"

Wynn replied, "Yeah, just knock first and wait in case he is on a call or in a chat."

Leslie headed into the studio and saw the doors to my office were open and knocked. I had wrapped up for the day on my active jobs and was checking on my active bids when they approached, "Oh Leslie, come on in."

Leslie walked in and introduced Miranda, "Ron, this is Miranda Morgan. She is going to be Abby's operations manager."

I stood up and we shook hands, "Nice to meet you. So tomorrow I will work on getting both of you setup with LDAP and email accounts for The Budget Holstein or actually I think we will be setting everyone up on the Boutique Holstein domain. I am not sure, still need to discuss that with Kacie. Also waiting for the equipment to arrive....while I am here...." I checked the tracking, "still out for delivery by 8:00 PM. Of course once the equipment does come Wynn and I still need to get it setup. But, we won't be doing anything until tomorrow afternoon. You two will go in with Lindsay and Sara tomorrow morning to the Thirsty Cactus store. Anyway dinner should be soon. Andy and Sara are on their way back; Laura and Sophie just got back not long ago. Just waiting on Drew from Vinnie's to deliver dinner."

Lindsay had heard Leslie was looking for her and came into my office, "May be we should have Leslie answer the door when Drew comes!"

I laughed, "Y'all sure like tormenting that poor kid. I still don't think he has forgiven us for moving on him so much! It is a wonder he still delivers to us...suppose it's the large tips we give him." I looked out and saw Wynn getting the patio setup, "I am going to go help Wynn. There is powder room around the corner if you want to wash up before dinner."

After I left Leslie asked Lindsay, "Hey, do you know where the keys are for that cage in the closet?"

Lindsay didn't seem phased by the question though she did explain, "You mean the one in the closet, which Sara bought for me?" Leslie nodded 'yes' and Lindsay casually told her, "Those keys are attached to a broken riding crop and should be hanging on the wall inside the closet."

Miranda asked, "What's with all the kinky clothing?"

Lindsay laughed, "Most of that is vendor samples that Ron got from our neighbor Gary. Much like a lot of the toys up in the loft...which I don't think you know about that."

Leslie giggled, "What kinky secrets are you all hiding from me?"

Lindsay teased her, "I'll tell you later."

Miranda went to the powder room and soon after the door bell chimed. Leslie answer the door to find a confused Drew, "Evening...um..."

Leslie told him, "Leslie, Leslie McKee. I'm Lindsay's older sister from Tennessee."

Drew recomposed himself, "Ah I see the resemblance. Y'all going to help me or should I just bring these into the kitchen?"

Lindsay told him, "We'll help you. Is there more?"

Drew told her, "Yeah, there is a box of sodas in the truck. If you take the pizzas and wings, I can go get those." Wynn had come back into the house and took some of the Pizzas from Leslie while Miranda followed her with the wings. Drew returned with the box of sodas and handed those off to Lindsay who pulled a \$50 bill from her corset and handed it to Drew, "Okay, that's the last of it. Have a good night."

Once everyone was out on the patio Leslie introduce Miranda to Sara, Sophie and Andy. During dinner Leslie asked Lindsay, "So you going to tell me."

Lindsay giggled, "Well let's see. Both Sara and I do fetish modeling. I used to be a performer at a club which Andy and I had down in Tucson before we got banished from the city."

Leslie joked, "You got banished because of a club?"

Andy laughed, "Not quite...and actually we were banished from doing business anywhere in Pima County. It was more of a business deal gone bad and then Pima County found out about the club were running without proper permits."

Lindsay added, "That is the reason we don't sell a lot of the same products at The Oro Valley location."

I added, "Linda did at one time before they tightened up enforcement. She tried to labor barter exchange me for a bullwhip. I was worried Sara would hurt Martina with it, so I declined."

Laura laughed, "Yeah Miss Kitty told me how expensive and what a pain it was to get the Adult Products permit. Even then there is still stuff you are not allowed to sell and have no clue as why."

Once again Miranda asked, "Miss Kitty?"

Laura replied, "Or as Miss Holstein usually calls her Madam Kat. She's my...ex partner...well once we get the fricking divorce finalized..."

I was surprised, "Laura! How lady like of you! You're getting soft, that ain't right!"

Laura laughed, "Sorry, gotten so used to having to be 'civilized' when I was at the resort. Anyway, Miss Kitty or Lynette Myers is the store manager at Oro Valley

and Aubrey is their operations manager.”

I joked to Miranda, “Laura used to have a reputation of cussing...a lot.”

The door bell chimed and I commented to Wynn, “Got to be Road Runner.” Wynn got up and went to the front door to retrieve the Road Runner order.

Leslie asked, “So Ron, how did you and Sara meet?”

I explained, “When I was going to the university I was doing freelance photography for independent fetish gear makers. I needed someone who could model their items. I put an ad out in the student newspaper and Sara was the only one who didn't freak out, threaten to call the cops or run away when told what was involved. Turns out she had done many modeling gigs prior. I was living with Laura at the time and we did IT projects in the evenings for businesses. After our father's death and the bizarre payouts we received we opted to split up. We had project clients in Nevada and Arizona so we thought it would be a good idea for one of us to be in each market. Plus Laura and her cheerleader roommates were driving me crazy. Sara was coming out of a bad relationship and when I told her I was coming back to Arizona she asked if she could move in with me.”

Sara added, “But Martina had other plans for me.”

I laughed, “Oh god, Martina! We had dated off and on when I was in Arizona, but nothing serious. There were many times she 'joked' about us getting married. Marc a good friend of mine and now her husband got me the lead on our old house over on Fairy Duster. Martina met me at that house after purchasing it. One thing led to another and she had grand plans for the house including adding the pool. Hell, as soon as the Realtor stepped out she pounced on me in the kitchen.”

Andy asked, “How did she have the money for the pool. Hadn't she just bought the Pink Monster?”

I had forgotten about the Pink Monster, “Wow, totally forgotten about her pink Hummer H2.”

Miranda confirmed, “Pink Hummer, was she Barbie?”

I laughed, “She did have blonde hair for a while, before going back to her natural dark. Yeah some people have called it that. The 'story' goes the dealer was thrilled she was paying cash and wanted every upgrade, he'd paint it whatever color she wanted. Since she likes Pink...”

Sara added, "Or else she fucked him!"

I replied, "Which wouldn't be that far fetched. She ended up giving it to Sara's sister, Maya when we divorced. Anyway, she had bought Google stock during the IPO and sold that for a tidy profit. She paid for the pool, cabana and bath house. So anyway, I had commented to Martina: Sara wanted to live with us. Martina surprisingly didn't have an issue and suggested Sara could be our maid."

Sara added, "I was in Texas for a while and so wanted to get away from my ex-boyfriend, that I accepted."

I decided I should tell the 'rest of the story', "So I returned back to Vegas after purchasing the house and wrapped things up with Laura. She bought a small condo outside of Vegas in Henderson. While I was in Arizona she had somehow managed to reconnect with Miss Kitty and they moved in together.

Laura gloated, "No easy task mind you. Had to get past her manager as she was a performer at The MGM Grand...then the...well that's not important."

I asked, "All that to end up here now, what went wrong? Anyway, Martina came out to Vegas and we went to a drive-thru UFO Chapel and were married by an ordain alien. Once the work was done on the house Martina and I moved in. Sara joined us not too long there after. This is when things got messy. Laura and I had our first major client in Arizona, Linda Holstein. She had moved the Budget Holstein into a new location in Oro Valley. She needed some IT work done. My role was getting all the PC's and the sever installed. Laura's role was the network portion. I had spent a couple days out there and Laura was to come in from Vegas on the final day and do her portion. Little did I know her and Martina had a rendezvous while I was gone. Linda called me that evening after I had returned home to ask what happened to Laura. I called Laura who gave me this story about eating something that didn't agree with her."

Wynn returned a few minutes later as I was mid-way through my story and told me, "I placed the boxes in your office."

I told her, "Great, I'll take a look after dinner."

She then asked, "I thought you had caught Martina and Laura together?"

I explained, "That was later on...a month or two later I had gotten called out by Gary while he was still in Vegas. The old building he had acquired from Zac Acme. I made out as far as the western edge of Phoenix when a wild Monsoon storm hit. There was huge dust storm which caused a massive pile-up for miles on I-10 shutting down the highway in both directions. The detour would have added about three hours to the trip. So when I got off the highway I called Gary and he

told me I could come back in the next day or two. I tried to call the house, but no one answered. Sara was gone as Martina had sent her away so her and Laura could have a 'girls night'. I tried to call Laura to let her know what was going on, but she wasn't answering her phone and I didn't bother leaving a message. So I get back to the house and there was a rental gold Cadillac sitting in the drive along with Martina's Pink Monster. I get into the house and it is completely dark downstairs. However, the upstairs hall lights were on and I could hear Martina moaning from getting fucked. I had my suspicions for a while she was screwing around, but didn't have any proof. I had thought it was with some guy she picked up at a club. I went into my office to get my digital camera and then went down the hall to the room she was in. I opened the door a bit and discovered it was Laura who Martina was screwing around with. I snapped a picture and with both being so much into moment were not aware I had. I went back to my office to process what I had just seen. Mind you, I was actually relieved that Martina was screwing Laura and not some random guy. I called Laura's phone; left a message letting her know I was on my way back. I waited, she came out only in her stockings and heels into the hall and listened to the message, then started freaking out."

Laura admitted, "Yeah, wasn't exactly wanting to be caught sleeping with your wife. Of course at the time I had no idea you were even back."

I continued, "True. Once you ran back into the room to get dressed, I took off. Think I went over to the gas station. You were gone by time I got back and Martina had moved the Pink Monster into the garage or gone somewhere. There is more to the story, but I'll tell it during tomorrow night's dinner."

Chapter 15: The Next of the Moving Parts and More Kinky Secrets!

After we finished dinner, Leslie asked, "Can we check out this 'loft' you speak of?"

Lindsay laughed, "Sure. Though someone needs to help Wynn with getting the patio cleaned up and the dishes."

Sophie volunteered, "I'll help her."

Laura told us, "As will I. Least I can do while we are staying here."

After dinner Lindsay and Sara took Leslie and Miranda up to the loft. Miranda looked around in awe, "Wow, you guys got a lot of neat stuff here!"

Sara explained, "Most all of it came from Gary our old neighbor. Ron has done a lot of work for him and his step-daughter both in Phoenix and Vegas. He lives behind us now, so we do see him from time to time, mostly when he has vendors come out for demos. They'll setup in Ron's studio. Lindsay and I usually end up

being the models. That's how I got the cage up in the room you're staying."

Lindsay turned to her sister, "So what do you want to try out?"

Leslie asked Miranda, "What about you?"

Miranda was still trying to take it all in, "So much good stuff!"

Sara suggested to Lindsay, "Why don't we torment them in the cage. Then you can do me on the table. Just make sure you let Wynn know."

Lindsay giggled, "That sounds like fun. Let me go pee and I'll let Wynn know."

Sara told her, "Okay, I'll start getting things setup." She turned to Leslie and asked, "Are you familiar with the process of 'edging'?"

Leslie told her 'no'. However Miranda knew, "Isn't that the process of tormenting some one to the point they are on the edge of an orgasm?"

Sara was impressed, "That's about right. So we are going to put you two into straitjackets and attach wands to you...while you are inside this cage."

Leslie was not too sure, "Huh....well...don't know about that..."

Miranda could hardly contain herself, "Oh come on it sounds like fun!"

Lindsay had come back from her suite where she had inserted a wireless egg into her pussy and then put her belt back on. On the way back to the loft she told Wynn on what was going on. Laura informed her that Sophie and her would be up there a little later and one of them could free Lindsay when the time came. Lindsay came into the loft and asked Sara, "What do you need me to do?"

Sara told her, "Get your sister into a jacket and I'll do Miranda just as soon as I run the magic power box to the cage." By the time Lindsay had Leslie in the straitjacket Miranda had already put herself into hers as much as she could. Sara returned with Gary's special magic power box, "Another toy of Gary's. It can control up to four wands, each running independent of each other in speed, pattern and frequency." She noticed Miranda had her jacket on and teased her sister, "She is so much more into this than you are Leslie!" Leslie didn't say anything.

Lindsay asked Sara, "Should I go ahead put Leslie in the cage?"

Sara replied, "Yeah. Once you have her in there connect a wand to her harness."

Lindsay grabbed Leslie's arm and led her to the cage. She helped her inside and then told her, "Scoot all the way to the end."

Leslie made her way towards the end and commented, "This thing is big inside."

Sara laughed, "Indeed it is. We've had Lindsay in there along with my sister and her partner. There was still plenty of room. Okay Lindsay, come on out and get Miranda in there." Sara led Miranda into the cage then attached the other wand to her harness. After crawling out of the cage she closed and locked the door then told them, "The cords are long enough so you can stretch out."

Laura and Sophie came into the loft and saw Sara and Lindsay. Laura asked, "What are you two going to be doing?"

Sara turned on the magic box then told her, "Now that we have Leslie and Miranda in the cage, Lindsay is going to be doing me on the table."

Sophie giggled, "Oh goody, that means I can put Laura on the spanking bench!"

Laura was really hoping at that moment Sophie wasn't mad at her. Back in the cage Leslie and Miranda sat waiting and wondering. Leslie's wand kicked in and at first she was surprised, but quickly was getting excited, "Oh...that feels good....NO...dang it." The magic box had shut off Leslie's wand and kicked on Miranda's.

Laura found herself a gag she liked and then removed her skirt before hopping up on to the spanking bench. Sophie put the gag into Laura's mouth and then strapped her down on the spanking bench. Sara and Lindsay went over to table and Sara retrieved all the accessories from the cabinet below. Lindsay attached a set of high-security hand cuffs to the back of the stool and placed the key on a nail in the wall near by. She helped Sara into the straitjacket then on to the table. After Sara was gagged, blindfolded and secured to the table, Lindsay took out the remote for the vibrator and set it to a slow pattern. She tossed the remote away from the table, though with her wrists in the high-security cuffs even if the remote was on the floor next to her she wouldn't be able to get to it. Lindsay double checked that Sara was fully restrained before she sat on the stool, cuffed her ankles then reached back and cuffed her wrist behind her. She dove into Sara's waiting and already wet pussy.

The first orgasm hit Leslie and she fell over on to Miranda's lap who giggled, "Enjoying yourself?"

Leslie was out of breath and replied, "Guess so..." Miranda leaned forward and planted a kiss on Leslie who experienced another orgasm.

It had been about an hour since Sophie and Laura had started playing. Sophie figured this would be a good time to take a break and switch places. Sophie released Laura. Laura removed the gag and put her skirt back on. She told Sophie, "Since Lindsay and Sara are occupied we should check on Leslie and Miranda."

As they were walking towards the cage Lindsay called out, "Abby, can you release me please? I need to pee!"

Laura laughed and told Sophie, "I'll take care of her go see how Leslie and Miranda are holding up in the cage." Laura walked over and saw the vibrator remote on the floor. She picked up the remote and put the vibrator on 'high'. Lindsay let out a scream. Laura giggled, "Whoops, my bad! You really shouldn't leave this laying around where someone can easily pick it up! Where are the keys for those cuffs?" Lindsay told her. Laura shut off the vibrator then retrieved the key for the cuffs. She released Lindsay's wrists and then told her, "I'll take care of Sara, you just go relieve yourself."

Sophie came over to the cage to see both Leslie and Miranda appeared to have had enough, "You two want to come out?"

Leslie begged, "Please can not take much more."

Sophie laughed, "Okay...let me see here...hmm...have no clue how to turn this thing off, I'll just unplug the wands." Sophie disconnected both wands from the magic box then went over to the door of the cage. She saw the key sitting on top of the cage and unlocked the door.

Laura had gotten Sara free and came over as Sophie was opening the cage, "I'll help you with them." Sophie pulled Miranda out of the cage and Laura removed the straitjacket and harness. Laura guided Leslie out the cage then removed her jacket and harness. Laura asked, "So how'd you two like that?"

Leslie was still trying to catch her breath, "That....was....wow. Intense. So much stuff try out still."

Laura reminded them, "You two are here for a couple more days."

Friday morning Laura, Leslie and Miranda rode in with Sara and Lindsay to the Thirsty Cactus Budget Holstein. Upon walking in Miranda was surprised by the size, "Wow this place is big."

Lindsay reminded her, "Abby's store will be much smaller. The second level here is mostly offices and storage and the third level is Kayré and Kacie's private residence. Abby and Sophie will have a private residence on the second level of

her store."

Kacie called me mid-morning, "Can you and Wynn meet us at our store after lunch?"

I told her, "Should be able to, we're just about done getting all the devices setup. I still need to add the new domain into Active Directory and setup new objects and accounts for Laura, Leslie and Miranda. I'll do that next as adding a domain takes some time. A lot of hurry up and wait with all the restarts."

After lunch Wynn and I headed over to The Budget Holstein at Thirsty Cactus. This was my first time being in the store since we had done the install. Lindsay upon seeing us, "Kacie told me you two would be coming."

I commented, "That's good. Wow, haven't seen this place since we finished the install last summer." I noticed she was wearing Martina's pink Budget Holstein hoodie, "Isn't that Martina's shirt?"

Lindsay laughed, "Yeah, she left it at the house a couple weeks ago...I'll wash it tonight and try to remember to give it back to her tomorrow when she comes over for Yoga. Anyway, let me take you up to the conference room." Lindsay lead us up the back stairs and found Kacie, "Ron and Wynn are here. I'll go get Leslie and Miranda if you are ready."

Kacie was wearing a red long sleeve Budget Holstein t-shirt, a very short khaki skirt and nude sheer pantyhose with flat sandals she told Lindsay, "Yeah, that's fine."

I commented on her outfit, "Did you borrow that shirt from Sara's sister? I don't usually recall you wearing such bold colors."

Kacie laughed, "It's Kayré's. I just grabbed a Budget Holstein shirt out of our closet before I came down this morning."

Over the next couple hours Wynn and I had Leslie, Laura and Miranda setup. When Wynn handed Laura her phone and iPad she laughed, "Here I thought I was done being tethered when I quit the resort."

Kacie giggled, "I know what you mean..."

There was a knock on the door and in came Linda, "Kayré told me y'all would be up here." She then noticed Leslie, "Oh hello Miss McKee!"

Leslie replied back, "Afternoon Miss Holstein."

Linda laughed, "Oh god no! Please, call me Linda. Miss Holstein makes me sound like an old lady."

I couldn't resist, "Wait, your not an old lady?"

Linda joked, "I'll have you know I'm....wait a lady never reveals her true age..let's just say I am 33! Kacie here is really the only one who calls me 'Miss Holstein'."

I told Linda, "Good answer."

Kacie replied, "Sorry a decade of Military School..."

I asked Linda, "Thought you were in San Francisco until the end of next week."

Linda explained, "Yeah, but I had already been out there for three weeks and was looking for a reason to come back. The situation with Abigail...", Laura cleared her throat, "...I mean Abby was a good reason."

Laura replied, "Thank you. Linda, let me introduce you to Miranda Morgan, my operations manager."

Miranda and Linda shook hands. Linda asked Laura, "Abby can I see you over in Kacie's office?"

Laura was not sure what was up and replied, "Suppose so, lead the way."

The two of them went into Kacie's office and Linda explained, "So I talked to our company accountant and they sent me this information." She handed Laura a sheet of paper and explained, "So this top amount was your investment and its portion of the total company value. This figure is what your portion is worth now given the current value of the company. Madam Kat and I talked to your attorney and I think we have worked out a way that this is not going to hold up your settlement. Instead of disbursing the funds to you, we simply would re-classify it as a non-liquid asset as part of the Tennessee store, being you are still part of the company. Now, you do have the right to claim your equity at this time if you choose, should you need the money. However, that would take a couple weeks and also you would need to work out with your attorney how you and Madam Kat would split that if you did so."

Laura thought for a moment, "Okay....thing is part of my overall investment was backed by Sophie as I had yet to sell our condo in Henderson at that point. I can always pay her back once we sell the house in Marana. Let me talk to her when we get back and I'll let you know."

Linda told her, "That works, too late today to do anything otherwise. I am staying here tonight and heading back to Tucson after the morning yoga with Martina at Ron's."

Once everything was done Laura, Leslie and Miranda rode back to the house with Wynn and I. When we arrived back Wynn told us, "Abby and I need to go to the market for tonight's dinner."

Laura recalled, "Oh yeah. That's right I am going to make our mother's Chicken Enchiladas. May I talk to Sophie real quick before we go?"

I told her, "Sure, you need to bring in your devices anyway."

Laura walked into the house and deposited her devices in her room. She went to look for Sophie and found her in a bikini sunning herself on the Grand Lawn. She called out, "Sophie." She sat over by the fire pit and explained everything to Sophie. She asked, "Can you wait until we get the money from the sale of the Marana house for me to pay you back what you loaned me?"

Sophie assured her, "Yeah I can. Not like I need money being you cover most of my expenses. Plus I'll be working at The Cheshire Farm's Cafe."

Laura came over and hugged Sophie, "Thank you, this will make things so much easier. I need to get going Wynn and I are going to the market." On their way over to the market Laura called Miss Kitty, "So, Sophie is fine with me paying her back once we get the proceeds from the Marana house so at this point I don't need to cash out my equity."

Miss Kitty told her, "Okay, I'll let The Cheetah know on Monday. Oh and the Realtor said they have a full price cash offer waiting for your review and approval. Said closing would be in about two weeks."

Wynn and Laura arrived at The Market. Laura told Miss Kitty, "I'll take a look when Wynn and I get back." Wynn and Laura found everything needed to make the dinner and then headed back to the house.

After bringing the food into the kitchen Wynn told Laura, "Still have a couple hours."

Laura agreed, "That's fine I need to check my email." She went over to my office and asked, "Can I use your computer for a bit? Miss Kitty says the Realtor sent me an offer."

I told her pointing to the desk by the door, "You can use Andy's, he rarely uses it."

Laura went over and signed into her email account. She reviewed and e-signed the documents. When she was done she felt a sense of relief, "Yet another moving part done. Still waiting on the divorce, but that should be soon." She took a moment to regain herself and asked, "Where is everyone anyway?"

I told her, "I believe Leslie and Miranda are out on the Grand Lawn with Sophie."

Laura laughed, "Great and I am sure they are talking about me!"

I added, "You should be flattered, you always like to be the center of attention."

Laura gave me the stink eye, "I don't think so Francis! You mistaking me for Martina. I'm going to take a quick shower before I tackle the dinner."

Andy returned home a little earlier than normal since he had been at Fountain Hills earlier in the week for a management meeting. Lindsay and Sara arrived home shortly before Wynn and Laura wrapped up on dinner. Everyone began to gather around the large kitchen island. Wynn had already opened the bi-fold door to the patio from the great room earlier to help cool off the house. She went out to get the table ready. She returned shortly and told Laura, "Patio is ready."

Laura told everyone, "Okay y'all, grab a plate and help yourself."

Wynn added, "Find a seat on the patio, each seat has a place setting already."

Laura realized she was going to need 'wine help' and called out, "Lindsay you in here?"

Lindsay yelled back, "Yes..." She walked over to Laura and asked, "Need me to pick some wine?"

Laura admitted her defeat, "Yes, please do!"

Lindsay went to the wine fridge and grabbed a couple bottles. Wynn came over and assisted Lindsay with getting the bottles prepped before taking them to the patio. Everyone had their food and sat down. Leslie was impressed, "Wow, Laura this is incredible. You've got cook this whenever we come over!"

Laura appreciated the compliment, "Thanks. It's our mother's recipe. This is what the third time I've made it? Once at my house in Marana, couple weeks ago when our mother and Blanche were here...yeah third time now."

'Twas time for me to continue the story from the night before, "Okay, so I had caught Laura and Martina together. This also leads into how Sara and Lindsay

met. Um....Lindsay does your sister know about your 'special underwear'?"

Miranda perked up, "Special underwear?"

Lindsay giggled, "Yes, she does actually. She found out last night as I had a vibrator locked in me when I was doing Sara on the table."

I continued, "Okay that makes things easier. So yeah Martina and Laura were sitting on a bed k-i-s-s-i-n-g! I came up this grand plan to get Martina to behave by putting her in chastity belt. I need to back up a bit for some context. Within a couple weeks of Sara moving in with Martina and I, she had asked if she could take some time off to see family in Vegas."

Sara clarified, "Yeah, I didn't want to tell you what I was really up to..."

I laughed, "I don't think it would have made a difference, if anything it would have confirmed my suspicions about Martina sooner. So while I was away at the original Budget Holstein install, Martina and Laura had their little party...."

Sara explained, "Yeah, Martina had asked me to make them dinner. Also, when Laura showed up Martina introduced her as 'Anne Marie'..."

Laura nearly choked on her wine, "Oh shit, I forgot about that. Anne Marie was my stage name when I was doing 'burlesque for dollars'."

I joked, "Better than dialing for dollars or stripping for dollars!"

Laura continued, "I have standards you know! It was Martina's idea as she was not sure if Ron had ever mentioned me to Sara. Again Sara, I am sorry about what we did to you that night."

Sara reminded her, "That's okay. I hold no grudges and as I have said before looking back it was quite erotic. I think it was more I was caught off guard. While I was making them dinner, they both had consumed an entire bottle of wine. Next thing I know Laura is behind me and Martina tried to mount me with a strap-on. I got both of them off of me and went to my quarters for the night. So when I went to Vegas to 'visit my grandmother', it was to see Gary to get fitted for a chastity belt to protect myself from them two!"

I explained, "I had no idea at the time, all I knew was when she came back from Vegas she had a new addition to her uniform. It was after the Unlikely Affair which I found out the real reason for the chastity belt. A couple days later I took Sara with me to Gary's shop in Vegas to complete the job I had to postpone earlier. Mainly I wanted to get her away from Martina and for us to come up with a plan to get back at Martina. She ended up trying out some of his toys while I

did what I needed to do at his shop. I guess I should also explain the unique business model Laura and I have. We *normally* don't charge labor. We do a modest mark-up on parts, but when it comes down to labor we barter for the vendors goods/services. In this case I don't even recall all of what I had gotten from Gary, but he did upgrade Sara's belt to a newer model. She opted to wear said belt with both plugs installed on the trip back home to Arizona. However, we had just arrived back into Arizona and while at a rest stop I had checked my messages. Linda or Kayré had called to tell me one of their computers had 'blown-up'. Sara was in the restroom and I called Kayré. After some probing questions I found out it was their sever. Luckily, my supplier was on our way down there...unfortunately for Sara that meant we were not going home and heading the opposite direction. Anyway, it was late afternoon by the time we made it over to Linda's shop and could access what was going on. I was rather tired from having just driven to and from Vegas within the past 12-hours and then down to Tucson. Linda put us up in a hotel near her store."

Lindsay started giggling, "Oh I remember now..."

I laughed, "The next morning we are down in the lobby doing the Continental Breakfast when Andy and Lindsay approached us then sat at our table. Andy and I started chatting and found out he had a chain of computer stores in the area. I started telling him about the mess I was working on with Linda's server. The two of us went back to the room and he helped me get the sever rebuilt. Meanwhile Sara and Lindsay were in the lounge for a couple hours until the staff kicked them out so they could setup for lunch. The two of them come back into the room where Andy and I were working and Lindsay exclaims 'Hey they are just as kinky as we are!'. Andy and I turn around to see both Lindsay and Sara had lifted their skirts revealing their chastity belts."

Sara laughed and pointed to Lindsay, "She started it!"

I concurred, "Yeah, I know you were so quiet and shy back then."

Wynn laughed, "I still don't believe that Sara was ever shy."

Laura confirmed, "She was, though I never interacted with her that much before Martina and I tried to molest her."

After dinner Leslie and Miranda helped Wynn get the patio table cleared while Sophie took care of the dishes. They all headed to the play loft. Miranda had seen the bondage stand earlier and asked, "How does this work?"

Lindsay came over and explained, "You will be held upright very tightly while a mini-wand is on your pussy." Miranda stood next to the stand and observed, "Not sure if I am tall enough..." Lindsay told her, "You would need to wear ballet boots

and I doubt you would last more than a couple minutes in them. Now, if you're flexible enough you could do the hogtie trainer..." Lindsay went about getting Miranda setup on the hogtie trainer. She would end up occupying the second trainer with the assistance of Wynn.

Meanwhile Leslie was looking around and saw the spanking bench. Sara walked over and asked, "Have you been naughty?"

Leslie was confused, "Have I been what?" she then realized Sara's joke, "...oh the bench..." She played along, "I suppose I have been, should we do something about that?"

Sara smiled and held out a paddle, then told Leslie, "Remove your skirt and get up on the bench." After she had Leslie strapped down she told her, "We can switch places later on...don't worry you won't hurt me. But do let me know if I get too rough, your sister has an insane pain tolerance."

Laura had put Sophie on the table and gave Sophie a long overdue fisting session. A couple hours later everyone got cleaned up and then we reconvened out on the Grand Lawn around the fire pit for night cap. The next morning Andy took off early and would grab Starbucks for himself and Max. Sophie helped Wynn with a light breakfast before morning yoga. While everyone was eating breakfast Martina let herself in. She was wearing her usual pink Yoga romper, but had a pink Boulders hoodie on over top. She greeted everyone, "Morning all!"

Leslie came over and introduced Miranda, "Martina, meet Miranda Morgan she is going to be working with Laura at her new store in Tennessee."

Someway, somehow Miranda and Martina had crossed paths before as Miranda recognized her, "Oh we've seen each other before...a long, a long time ago."

Martina looked over Miranda trying to remember, "Yeah, might have been a club out in Nashville when I was doing a connoisseur's tour in Tennessee. Nice to see you again."

Lindsay came over with the pink Budget Holstein hoodie and told Martina, "You left this here a few weeks ago. Kept forgetting to returning it to you, except whenever I wearing it. I did wash it last night."

Martina laughed, "Oh, so that's what happened to that! You know what, go ahead and keep it. I had Marc get me a 'company' hoodie in pink so I am good."

Lindsay told her, "Okay, that works. I didn't want to be accused of stealing your look!"

Martina giggled, "Sure whatever." She saw Wynn, "Hey Wynn, can you help me with the table and chaises?" She turned her attention back to Lindsay, "Is your sister and Miranda joining us? We should have extra rompers."

Lindsay told her, "I know Leslie will, not sure about Miranda."

Miranda heard her name, "Not sure about what?"

Lindsay told her, "Joining us for Saturday yoga. Martina is a certified Yoga instructor and does classes at The Boulders Resort."

Miranda replied, "I do private sessions back home, don't have the fancy outfit though."

Lindsay explained, "We have extras in all sizes and colors. Martina bought an entire lot."

Martina defended herself, "Hey it was cheaper than buying a few. Anyway, I need to finish setting up, Lindsay can help you."

The door bells chimed and since Wynn was occupied I went over to answer the door. I opened the door to find Linda, Kayré and Kacie, "Ah, you did say you were going to do Saturday Yoga with Martina."

Linda joked, "At my age I need to stay flexible."

I laughed, "Sure. Okay, follow me The Lady in Pink is getting setup. Still waiting on Maya and Peaches." We had just walked into the studio when the door bell chime again. Wynn informed me she would get the door this time. I told her, "Likely Maya and Peaches."

Maya walked in and saw everyone in the studio, "Wow, big turnout this morning. Is that Lindsay's sister?"

I told her, "Yes and also Laura's operation manager for her Tennessee store she should be opening soon." Lindsay came over and introduced Maya and Peaches to Miranda and Leslie.

Chapter 16: The Kinky Conclusion and Thou Shall Not Fall!

After Yoga, most everyone spent the rest of the afternoon in the loft. Laura talked to Kacie and Linda informing them to go ahead with the investment reallocation and she would not be cashing out her equity at this time. Kacie told her she would be in contact with Miss Kitty and Laura's attorney on Monday. Wynn and I headed to the market so I could get the fish and fixings for tonight's

dinner. When we returned Maya and Peaches were heading out. Maya told me, "We need to get back so Peaches can let Cream do her business before she goes to work. See you next weekend." When we got in the house Kayré and Kacie were heading out along with Martina. I went to work on getting the grill warmed up while Wynn prepped the fish. A couple hours later dinner was served.

Time for the finale, "Okay, so y'all know how Sara and I met and then Lindsay and Sara. Lindsay and Sara made plans for the four of us to get together the following weekend. You guys were doing something at the Fountain Hills store that Friday?"

Andy thought for a moment, "Oh yeah. A Freaky Friday Full Moon Sale, but the manager couldn't stay that late."

I asked, "Which one was that; Houdini or Glen Campbell?"

Lindsay laughed, "Like a Rhinestone Cowgirl!"

Andy reminded her, "Wrong manager, it was Houdini: made a great escape one night and took everything in his office that wasn't bolted down. 'Glen Campbell' as Ron likes to call him was his successor and about the time the shit hit the fan with The Catalina Foothills store."

Lindsay explained, "Well, I did knee him in groin after he put his hand on my ass. Glen Campbell had been in the news recently for kneeing a Fountain Hills deputy in the groin..kind of ironic. That was when we ended up hiring Zina, though we really wanted Dunn Brooks, but he was in Wyoming at the time."

I continued, "Ah okay yeah that makes sense. Turns out Gary was also going to be in town that weekend with his crew to install some toys I had ordered."

Sara asked, "Weren't we have something else done too....the tubs?"

I recalled, "Oh yeah, the Anozira Tubs forgotten about those. Anyway I sent Martina to Vegas since I had work going on at the house and so she could 'meet' my sister for the first time...at least that is what I wanted them to think...When Sara and I got back home from Vegas with a lay-over in Oro Valley we had Marc over for dinner. During that dinner Sara made sure Martina's wine glass never went empty. Martina eventually went upstairs to our room and passed out on the bed. Sara got Martina's measurements and sent them off to Gary to have a chastity belt made for Martina. So anyway, that weekend Andy and Lindsay along with Gary, plus his soon to be wife Bunny and her sister Bambi were all here. That was when Gary dropped the bombshell that he was going to get married, they wanted to have a house built out here and he was going to setup a shop in Arizona." We had wrapped up dinner, "There is more to tell, but dinner is done

and am sure y'all want to play."

Leslie told us, "We've spent most of the day playing. Kind want to hear the rest of the story. As I assumed at some point you will explain how you and Sara ended up becoming married."

I told them, "Yeah I can do that. Let's move out to the Grand Lawn so Wynn and Sophie can get the table cleared." Wynn went over to the Grand Lawn and started the fire pit. Once everyone sat down I explained, "Now, if you look out yonder those lights down there way off is our old house. What I was not aware of when I first purchased the house was that deed was for three lots. So I owned the entire north side of the circle; my house being in the middle and the lots on either side were empty. When Gary told me they wanted to have a house out here, I gave him the lot on the west. Somehow I worked out this plan with Linda, Gary and Marc plus Sara to punish Martina. Linda was not aware she was even involved as she had been asking me to come back out to do some upgrades. This community is a semi-custom home development. That means they have 'base models' and you can choose to expand and upgrade as long as you stay within the footprint of the base plan. You also had to option to use one their contractors or your own. Gary had Marc hire him a contractor to do the excavation and slab for the house. Gary still used the Adobe Home's contractors to build the house itself."

Sara was starting to recall, "Oh yeah! Martina's wake up call. Didn't you have to bribe the contractor?"

I laughed, "I think Marc did. So Sara, Gary, his girls and I were all going to go down to Oro Valley. The Zinfandel's needed to get measured for their wedding attire. That was the barter exchange I did with Linda for the work I was going to be doing while out there. So the night before I had told Martina we would all be heading down to Oro Valley the next morning and would be there most of the day. That evening, we made sure she stayed home and her wine glass never hit bottom. I think Gary ended up carrying her up to our room. One thing about Martina is when she is drunk and out, nothing will wake her until she has slept it off. So Gary fits the belt on her and we left her on top of the bed naked except for the belt. We left around five that morning, as I wanted to be as far way as I could when Martina had her wake up call. So back to what Sara was asking, yes we had to bribe the contractor not to break ground until around 8:00 AM. You see in the summer out here they can start work as early as 5:30 AM. So, around eight they broke ground and dump a load of rocky soil into an empty dump truck. That woke Martina up and she discovered she was in a chastity belt."

Miranda commented, "Smooth! How did she react?"

I told her, "I think she was confused at first. Between the fact she was hung-over

and awake before noon! She did eventually call me saying she was stuck in one of 'Gary's toys' and she couldn't get it off. I explained to her what it was, that it was not coming off anytime soon since we already down in Florence. I also laid down the law how she had been taking advantage of Sara. Plus, Marc had been telling me she was acting inappropriately at work and was getting to a point he would have to let her go. I assured him, I'd be fixing her behavior shortly and to give me a couple weeks."

Laura confessed, "Martina called me all hysterical. I told her she brought this upon herself and I suspected Ron knew about our affair. She naturally denied it; telling me there was no way Ron knew."

Andy recalled, "Didn't you call me in for 'backup' at The Budget Holstein?"

I told him, "Indeed I did. So, this was about a year from when we did the first install there. Since that time, Linda added a lot of new people. As a result, someone other than Laura had gotten creative in scaling her network in a manner that defied the laws of physics or at least those of Cisco. What I thought was going to be a day-trip soon turned into an over-night trip...times three. It took Andy and I two days just to fix her mess of a network and get her shop back online. Then on day three Linda as a token of her appreciation took us on a day-long site seeing tour of southern Arizona. Needless to say, by the time we got back Martina was frustrated as hell and begging for release."

Laura asked, "Wasn't that about the time she came to live with me?"

I explained, "Yeah, may be a couple months before. Marc had told me how well behaved Martina was and glad he didn't need to fire her. However, couple weeks later he calls with me 'bad news' and my first thought was Martina was getting back to her old ways. Turns out he had just been informed by the majority owners of the resort they intended to sell and would cease operations shortly. So they were going to transfer to a sister property out in Henderson. This was right around the time we did the original Boots job out in Frisco and 'rescued' Sara's sister."

Andy laughed, "Yet, another project you got in over your head on!"

I recalled, "Yeah, there seems to be a reoccurring theme of 'it looked so much smaller on paper!' At that point Martina and I agreed to a 'cooling off' period until she knew what was going to happen. I sent Laura the key to Martina's chastity belt and told her to release her as she saw fit. Anyway, Maya had moved in with us and was going to transfer the University here to finish her Pharmacy Tech program. I don't recall why Laura and Miss Kitty were already at the house. May be it was for the Boots Frisco project...too long ago for me remember the details. Besides the courses for her Pharmacy Tech program Maya had taken a semester

of contract law and told Marc to have some type of 'no fault' clause added to their contracts. That way if within 90-days him and Martina decide the job didn't work out, they could leave. The resort could not sue them and they could not sue the resort. Martina gave the Pink Monster to Maya as she opted to take the Jag with her to Vegas."

Laura told me, "I think it was more that we would've spent a small fortune on gas had we taken the Hummer."

I laughed, "Yeah, and likely would have stopped for gas every couple hundred miles. So Maya ended up getting a job over at Vinnie's doing deliveries in the community on the weekends with The Hummer."

Sara recalled, "Oh man, that day they all left..."

I concurred, "Yeah, the Zinfandel's were here too. They all left for Vegas at the same time. So the house was suddenly very empty and quiet..."

Sara added, "...and a mess!"

I remembered, "Oh boy. It wouldn't have been so bad if Laura and Miss Kitty hadn't tracked out the mess into the hall which then got tracked throughout the rest of the house. Took my carpet and tile guy a couple days to get the house cleaned. So then, a couple weeks had passed and we had not heard anything from Martina. I talked to Laura and she told me Martina was working long hours....which was not like Martina at all. A couple days later I am working down in the playroom at our old house when Sara comes in to tell me a process server is asking for me. I head upstairs to meet him and he hands me a Petition for Divorce from The Cheetah. I recall looking it over and telling Sara how I was amazed that all she wanted was the Jag...then Gary walked into the kitchen and asked something about us 'spiting property' then he left. I still to this day don't know how long he had been there or what he wanted."

Sara told me, "He showed up moments before asking for you. I told him you were down in the playroom and I would let you know he was here. I think he went into the library and then I forgot about him when the process sever showed up."

I told her, "Ah...makes sense. I had my collection of vintage adult magazines in the library. Likely occupying his time while he was waiting. He must have heard us in the kitchen. Still, though he wasn't out here yet..office and house were still under construction. Guess he got spooked when he heard us discussing the divorce. Him and Bunny were about to get married. He did make an off comment about Martina and I's divorce: Something about Sara and I should marry...then the took off saying he needed to be somewhere..."

Sara laughed, "Then Maya came home later that day and caught us necking in the kitchen! She too said we should get married."

I laughed, "Necking? What are we in high school?! So Martina did end up calling me a couple days later hoping I had cooled off from the divorce serving...though I was thrilled...never really wanted to marry her.."

Laura laughed, "Funny, I feel the same about myself and Miss Kitty. I don't think either one of us really wanted too. We kept using the excuse that same-sex marriages would not be recognized by the State of Arizona. Then it happened...then Mother and Blanche wanted to marry and then we got the crazy idea to follow your queue having a dual wedding."

I paused for a moment and told her, "I don't know, always seemed like you two got along well, but then again I wasn't around all the time. So, I could tell when I was talking to Martina she hated the resort, but she wouldn't come out and tell me. Marc on the other hand flat out said it was horrible. The prior resort was mostly executives and high end clients. The place in Henderson he called it an amusement park occupied by entitled families. Now, when we all were down in Oro Valley, Linda put us all up at Loews Ventana Canyon Resort in Tucson. I don't think I've told Leslie this, Laura knows; Linda has a lot of connections in the hospitality industry all over the country."

Laura confirmed, "Yeah she knew about me getting the job at the Ritz when you told her I had interviewed at The Cosmopolitan in Vegas. That was when I ask you to talk to her about Miss Kitty working at the Oro Valley store...having no idea what would happen in a few years."

I explained, "I would not be surprised if the manager at Loews had called her earlier that day to ask her if she knew anyone who could fix their computer system. Because as soon as we checked in I was told the manager wanted to talk to me. This would lead to an interesting chain of events."

Lindsay declared, "I need to pee!"

Sara laughed, "You always need to pee, just like Andy is always hungry!"

Andy joked, "Now that you mentioned it, it is about time to feed my tapeworm..."

Wynn laughed and then asked Sophie, "Help me in the kitchen, we'll get everyone brandy and ice cream."

I announced, "Okay we will adjourn for a 10-minute recess!"

After we all used the restroom and returned, Wynn and Sophie served us. Once

everyone was settled in, "Like I said that repair job started an interesting chain of events. A couple days after we had returned and had talked to Marc and Martina, I got a call from The Boulder's resort. The manager there was having computer issues, think her computer was over heating. I went up there and while I was working on her computer we started chatting. She told me before she came up to The Boulder's she had worked at Valley Shadows, which was Marc's old resort. I commented about how Marc and Martina had worked there, until the resort closed and both of them had transferred to Henderson. She tells me Marc was her old manager, but he had to let her go during the economic downturn after 9-11. She wished they were still here in Arizona as she need a concierge manager and activities director. I knew Marc and Martina had the clause in their contacts so I told her, I might be able to get them to come back to Arizona. She told me she would hire them on the spot if that were the case. I advised her I'd talk to Marc and have him get in contact with her, but it could be a few days. So I did finally get a hold of Marc and he was out here the next day to meet with the manager at Boulders. Right about that time too The Cheetah had finalized our divorce."

Laura sighed, "Wish mine would have gone that quick. I had forgotten about the shit with damn fucking investment I made when Miss Kitty and I got involved with the Oro Valley Budget Holstein. That shit is what was causing all these fucking delays and causing a royal pain in my ass!"

Lindsay was laughing, "There she is! That's the Laura we all know!"

Sophie added, "Oh, but she's just getting warmed up..."

Laura laughed, "Really guys? I'm not that bad...of course if you were a fly on the wall in my office at The Ritz with the door closed when shit kept breaking..."

I continued, "With the divorce finalized, Marc and Martina got married in Vegas before they came back to Arizona. Sara and I ended up getting married a month or two later when the Zinfandel's got married. We had the ceremony on the eastern of the three lots. Now, once we got married Sara started managing the projects for me and it didn't seem right for her still be our maid. Not that we really needed one as it was just her and I along with Maya. But, then again our house is always like a hotel. Now, obviously we couldn't just hire any ole maid given our kinky lifestyle. So I called Andy and Lindsay they told me about Wynn..."

The next morning Laura, Leslie and Miranda joined Kayré and Kacie along with Lindsay and Sara for the Sunday morning Budget Holstein Conference call. Kacie started out the meeting, "Morning everyone. We have joining us today Abby Merlot, Leslie McKee and Miranda Morgan who are all part of the forthcoming Franklin, Tennessee store. We still don't have an opening date...we hope around Thanksgiving."

After they wrapped up with the call Leslie and Miranda headed back to Tennessee. The next day Laura was contacted by the title company regarding the information for the account to deposit the proceeds from the sale of the Marana house. She advised them to contact her attorney. Miss Kitty called Laura that evening and advised with the closing of the house and the issues with her Budget Holstein investments being taken care of, they should be able to finalize the settlement sometime this week or the following. A couple days later Leslie did a video call with Laura to show her the progress on the cash wrap counter. Laura was impressed, "Wow, that is really turning out nice. Have you showed your sister yet?"

Leslie told her, "I'll send her a picture later. Any updates?"

Laura explained, "Not yet. The attorney is saying they should have the settlement finalized this week or the next, but I ain't betting on it."

Leslie understood, "Well when it's done we can go from there. Charlotte is really looking forward to having Sophie working at the Cafe."

Laura was pleased to hear this, "That's good, she is getting a bit antsy not having anything to do, of course I can't say I am doing much better. I'll let you know when I hear more. Take care." After she wrapped up she noticed she had a text from Sir Finley telling her he was almost done with Sophie's cage and would be shipping it out the next week. Thursday morning the furniture store called Laura to advise her they were schedule to deliver the following afternoon. Laura called Leslie, "Hey. My furniture is suppose to be delivered tomorrow afternoon, can you be there?"

Leslie told her, "I can. I'll video call you when they arrive."

Laura was restless with a lot on her mind. She went out to the Grand Lawn and grabbed a chair. She looked out to the mountains to the east watching the shadows of the passing clouds. Sophie was passing by and saw her. She came over and asked, "You doing alright Mistress?"

Laura was kind of lost in thought, "Oh...um....I suppose. I keep wondering what the hell I am doing. I spent all that time and money to get my Cisco certifications. Ended up with a great job that I just upped and quit..."

Sophie knelled beside her and replied, "If I may Mistress, that job was killing you. You are doing the right thing Mistress."

Laura was trying to overcome her own demons and wasn't paying that much attention to Sophie, "That is true, it certainly was....wait why the fuck are you

calling me Mistress?"

Sophie laughed, "To see if you are paying attention to what I was telling you Mistress! We've been through a lot of crap together and we always come out stronger."

Laura was regaining herself and told Sophie, "You are right. Perhaps once I get the divorce settled and can get back to Tennessee things will get better...but then again it is the divorce that is troubling me...I don't know...leave me to think."

Sophie grew concerned, "That may not be such a good idea. You need to talk about this instead of bottling up inside of you." Laura ignored her. Sophie sighed, "As you wish, Mistress." She headed back into the house and to my office. I was finally able to get a decent project and was getting the framework laid down when Sophie came to my office, "Ron, may I speak to you?"

I looked up and noticed her, "Oh hey Sophie. I am a bit busy right now, can it wait?"

Sophie calmly replied, "No sir, it can not."

I was surprised by her response and knew something could be seriously wrong, "Okay...have a seat give me a couple minutes to wrap up what I am doing and I'll be right with you." Sophie closed the door behind her and then took a seat. I finished setting up the database and made notes on my end for the connection strings, "Sorry about that. What's going on?"

Sophie explained, "I am worried about your sister."

Now I was really getting concerned if Sophie was worried about Laura, "Yikes! What's going on?"

Sophie told me, "I think she is having a breakdown. She's questioning everything from the divorce, quitting the Ritz to moving Tennessee."

I asked, "Where is she right now?"

Sophie replied, "Outside, just sitting looking off to the distance."

Sophie and I headed outside. I pulled up a chair next to Laura, but did not say anything. She looked at me and started crying, "What have I done Ron? Why do I feel like I wasted everything? Why do I have this nagging feeling our father was right?"

I was confused by her last question as I was never aware of anything said to her

by our father. I reminded her, "You have done nothing wrong. You are heading a different direction in your life/career than you had planned, but that does not mean what you have done has been wasted or you have failed."

Laura had calmed down a bit, but still had self doubts, "All the time, the money the effort I put into my CCNP certs...just throw that away when I left the Ritz. Like I will ever use it in a retail store."

I explained, "I don't think so, all that was a pathway or stepping stone. It has allowed you to move on to something bigger and better...and by better, I mean a better fit for you. I did the same thing and I don't regret it."

Laura was unaware, "Wait what?"

I told her, "When I came to Arizona after warping up at The University I was working for a contracting company that did IT deployment. It was good money, but grueling with tiring overnight installs. Very much stressful as hell. I knew I needed to do something different and was saving up money to go independent. Our father's death and resulting insurance payment advanced that time line dramatically. Also, I don't think you know my degree in IT is not a Bachelors."

Laura was surprised, "Then what did you earn at Arizona State?"

I told her, "I ended up with a Bachelor's degree in Marketing, but my Associate degrees are in Business and Information Technology. I earned the Business Degree first, transferred to Arizona State and pursued the Bachelors. Midway through I found out the community college had an IT program. I already had 75% of the required course work done for that program so I was able to get that degree shortly after getting the Bachelors."

Laura seemed to understand, "So you are saying that my certs and my work at The Ritz has allowed me the opportunity to do Tennessee?"

I reminded her, "You said it yourself all the money you've made working at The Ritz is what has allowed you to pursue The Boutique Holstein. Besides you're not totally throwing away your CCNP certs, we still do independent projects and you know how to manage your own network."

Laura asked me, "Do you think I made a mistake divorcing Miss Kitty?"

Based on what she had said the other night during dinner I told her, "No, the mistake you made *was* marrying her just because you could. I don't know if you were trying to prove something or you two did it because of mother and Blanche. Either way, it wasn't meant to be. You both agree that is the case. It happens to lots of people and nothing to be ashamed of. Look at Gary and Britney of course I

think they were both drunk..."

Laura added, "Or you and Martina..."

I laughed, "Oh hell yeah...real fine example I set there. But, at least we were sober...well I was....not so sure about Martina. Looking back I think us marrying was more to get her shut up about it. But, we both agreed it was not meant to be and it was for our best interests we moved on. You need this and Sophie, and I are here for you personally. Leslie and Miranda are there for your on the business side. I know I keep saying this, but I believe it and you needed to be reminded: Thou Shall Not Fall!"

Chapter 17: Troubles with the 'Pain in the Rear' client and a Modeling Opportunity

Laura hugged me, "Thank you. I agree, once I can get back to Tennessee and keep myself occupied things will be better."

I looked at the time and noticed it was getting close to lunch time. I suggested, "Why don't the four of us get away from here for a while and head over to Carefree for lunch and explore?"

Laura was trying to figure out how I came up with 'four', "Four? You, I and Sophie....oh Wynn. That sounds good."

I told her, "Well get ready and I'll go find Wynn." I headed back to the house and found Wynn in kitchen taking inventory. I told her, "Laura, Sophie and I are going up to Carefree for lunch and to explore. How about you join us?"

Wynn replied, "Don't need to go to the market until tomorrow and the house is clean...yeah I can do that. Just need to change out my uniform, when we leaving?"

I laughed, "Very shortly. Meet us in the far garage." A few minutes later we were on our way to the Chuck Wagon Cafe out near the Christmas tree farm. As we passed by the tree farm I noticed a sign with an opening date which I assumed was the weekend after Thanksgiving. We ate lunch and just headed out the door of the cafe when Laura's phone rang.

Laura commented, "Oh it's Leslie. My furniture must have arrived. I still not even sure where I want to put stuff...haven't spent much time there to really get an idea."

I suggested, "Since you are not getting that much, just have them put it all in the store. Leslie and I can help you get it all setup when we come back."

Laura agreed and answered the call, "Hey Leslie. Say, I'll make this really easy; just have them put everything in the store. When Ron and I get back there in a couple weeks we can arrange everything then. I still not even sure where I want stuff."

Leslie replied, "Okay, that works."

The four of us were exploring some of the shops when Wynn got a message notification from one of our clients. She reviewed the message and told me, "Hey Ron, your 'pain in the rear' client is having issues again!"

I was assuming she was talking about Linda, "Great, now what's going on with Linda?"

Wynn laughed, "No, not Linda....your other pain in the rear client..."

I was confused, "My other pain in the...." I then recalled back to when I had been at Gary's late last year and Bunny calling him that, "Oh Gary..."

Laura joked, "Even worse!"

Wynn replied, "Well technically it is Lulu, something about they can not access the Vegas servers or the Internet."

Laura wondered, "ISP outage?"

I laughed, "Nah, too easy. Let me give her a call real quick." I put her on speaker, "Lulu, Ron Merlot, AZOutback Consulting. We have you on speaker" Laura made her presence known, "Laura Mey....I mean...Merlot here too. Understand you are having some connectivity issues?"

Lulu explained, "Yeah. Gary called me from Henderson said they can not access some of our servers, but can get out to the Internet and their own servers. We can not connect to their servers or get out on the Internet."

I asked, "Did you check with Verizon to make sure there is not a service outage."

Lulu told us, "They said there are no issues and they can communicate with our modem."

Laura told her, "Okay, hold on for a couple moments so I can consult with Ron." I put Lulu on hold and she told me, "Sounds like either a border router failed or a switch. But, it sounds like they can access their own servers so that would rule out a switch. Would need to get back to the house..."

I told her, "Hmm...they have another switch for the production area, but yeah something doesn't make sense here. Will need my laptop too. Let her know we could be there in about an hour and half."

I took Lulu off hold and Laura advised her, "We have a theory of what's wrong, but we are away right now and can't test it. We can be out to your shop in about an hour and half; would that work?"

Lulu was appreciative, "Yes, that will work. I'll see you then."

The four of us headed back to the house to get our equipment. Laura told Sophie, "Ride up front with Ron. I'll need Wynn to provide me with IP addresses so I can remote in or very least try to ping and run tracert."

Sophie replied, "Yes Mistress!"

Wynn and I looked at Laura who laughed then told Sophie, "Could you please fucking stop calling me Mistress?!"

Sophie giggled, "Seeing if you were paying attention...as you wish Abby."

As we made our way to Gary's shop Laura was becoming more confused, "This makes no sense, I can ping all the way to both switches, but I can't get to production's server...I can get to sale's though. Then tracert gets as far as the main switch, but times out trying to go to production. She did say they could access their own server?"

I told her, "Yeah, she specifically said they can get to their own server."

Laura closed her laptop and replied, "Just have to wait until we get over there and see what going on. Thinking might be a physical layer issue and not with the equipment."

I had an understanding as to what Laura was getting at, "You suspect someone disconnected a network cable or came loose?"

Laura laughed, "It sounds like that, but then no one other than Lulu and Gary have access to the network room. Neither one of them would do something like that."

We arrived at Gary's shop and the four of us walked in. Lulu saw us, "Wow, four of you...that bad?"

Laura laughed, "Hope not. It has been a long while since I been in this building

and I don't recall the layout."

Lulu explained, "We have a production area on the north side and south side is sales and our offices."

I advised, "The network room is also on the south side. There is a satellite switch on the north side, somewhere. Lead the way please."

Lulu took us to the server room and let us in. Laura and I were getting our laptops setup while Wynn did a quick inspection of the racks and equipment. Wynn advised us, "Everything appears to be running, let me go around back and take a look at the connections."

Sophie suddenly commented, "I smell a rat!"

Lulu laughed, "Um...okay?"

I looked at her confused and asked, "You what?"

Sophie repeated herself, "I smell a rat!"

I replied, "That's what I thought you said."

Everyone was really confused as to what she was talking about then Wynn yelled out, "Um...Abby, Ron take a look at this!"

We walked over to see Wynn holding a network cable which had been chewed through. I happened to look over in the corner and saw rat droppings. It dawned on my Sophie was indeed smelling a rat, "Um...Lulu you're going to need an exterminator or the very least a cat."

Lulu had no idea what we were talking about, "Why?" I showed her the chewed network cable and the rat droppings in the corner, "Oh my! So she was literally smelling a rat. Hmm...not surprised. they'd broken ground recently on the new phase. Some of the neighbors have been reporting bugs, but not vermin. Okay, I'll call our pest guy and see when they come out. How difficult is this going to be to fix?"

Laura was reviewing the wiring diagram with Wynn, "That's one of the two trunk lines running from the main switch to production's switch. Still doesn't explain why Henderson can not access your servers."

Wynn was still checking all the connections and noticed a partially chewed cable connecting the router to the switch. She removed the cable and showed it to us, "This could be why."

Laura asked, "Did you find anymore?"

Wynn replied, "I checked everything else and these are the only two. Though I am surprised a rat would climb up here."

I told Lulu, "The trunk line is going to be a pain, but it can be done. The patch cable between the switch and router is easy fix. I need to check to see what I have with me." I headed outside to the Jeep and took a look and found a 100 foot patch cable which was longer than I needed, but would work for what I needed. In a couple hours we had everything repaired and had full connectivity.

Lulu asked, "Are you going to send Gary a bill or do I need to pay you now."

Wynn told her, "No, you're fine. Gary has a service agreement for this site and Henderson which covers issues such as this."

I asked Lulu, "What's Gary doing in Henderson anyway?"

Lulu told me, "I'd say he is trying to get away from Bunny and Bernie..."

I added, "Or Claudette!"

Lulu laughed, "Ah yes, the mother-in-law. Anyway, Cristina needed his help for launching a new product line. Think they are going to try it out in Henderson first before we do here."

The four of us packed up and headed back to the house. Laura commented on the way back home, "That was an odd, but nice distraction from everything that has been going on."

I laughed in agreement, "Yeah that was. I can't recall in all my years doing this ever running into this issue. Surprising too, considering what a mess some of the sites we have worked at have been."

We arrived home about an hour before dinner. I headed back to my office while Laura went to take a soak while Wynn and Sophie took care of dinner. I resumed working on the project I was working on this morning. An hour later Wynn announced dinner. During dinner Laura and I filled Andy in on our adventure at Gary's shop."

Andy joked about Sophie's talent, "Oh, so she can smell rats...she has a super power!"

Sophie laughed, "I don't think so. I dealt with far too many rats in my flat in

Boston.”

As we wrapped up with dinner I told Sara and Lindsay, “Do me a favor, take my sister up to the loft and spend some time with her.”

Sara was puzzled, but agreed and asked Lindsay, “You have your cuffs on you?” Lindsay pulled out a set of cuffs for her skirt pocket, “Of course you do! Cuff her and we'll figure out what we can do with her.” The three of them headed up the stairs to the play loft.

Sophie went to assist Wynn with the dishes. I told her, “Can you come with me please.” We headed to my office and had her sit down. After closing the door I asked, “I know things are tough right now with Laura, how are you holding up?”

Sophie sighed, “Kind of bored, not used to having her around so much. When we were down south and she worked 10+ hours a day and sometimes eight days a week!” I laughed at her Beatles reference. She continued, “I would do occasional photo shoots for that group who bought the McGraw's old club. Usually, a couple days a week for a couple hours. When we came up here, I had to stop doing that. Abby had mentioned something prior about me working at The Cheshire's Cafe?”

I remembered Laura telling me about the conversation she had with Leslie in regards to Sophie, “Yeah. Charlotte is really excited to have some help.”

Sophie was a little relieved, “Good, so I won't be stuck at home all the time. There won't be as much for me to clean with just being Laura and I.”

I reminded her, “Well, you are going to have a retail space, beside the residence.”

Sophie laughed, “Oh yeah, very true. But, she will have employees who will keep the retail space clean. As I told her, I am not going to be involved in any part of her store and that includes cleaning it.”

I told her, “Hopefully, her and Miss Kitty can get everything settle with The Cheetah very soon.”

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Meanwhile Wynn had finished the dishes and headed up to the play loft to see what the three girls were up to. She ascended the stairs and noticed the three of them were just standing around. The dominating side of Wynn kicked in, “Hey now! We can't have this! Lindsay grab me three straitjackets. Sara get three wands and harnesses. Laura just stay where you are, don't go anywhere!”

Laura laughed, "I ain't about to try to go down those stairs in these heels with my hands cuffed behind me."

Sara and Lindsay returned with the items requested. Wynn told Lindsay, "Put Sara and Laura in straitjackets and harnesses. Then put them in the cage. I need to grab Gary's magic box and I think some gags are in order too!"

Lindsay replied, "Yes Mistress Wynn!" She was confused as to why there were three sets of jackets, wands and harnesses, but only Sara and Laura were being equipped, "Why did you have us get three sets?"

Wynn laughed, "Because there are three of you..."

The light bulb went off in Lindsay's head, "Oh...okay that makes sense!"

Wynn told her, "Once I get back, I'll put you in a jacket then into the cage as well."

Wynn went to get the remaining toys. Laura was wondering, "Will all three of us fit in there?"

Lindsay told her, "At the Acme House, I was in there with Maya and Peaches. So, yes the three of us can fit."

Wynn returned with the remaining toys. She had Lindsay connect the wands to Laura and Sara's harnesses and gag them. After she had the magic box setup she put Lindsay in a jacket and wand harness. After gagging Lindsay, she guided her into the cage and attached the wand to the harness. She closed and locked the cage door, then went over and started the magic box. She reminded them, "This box will have the wands coming on and off at different time...sometimes all at once, some longer or shorter than others. Now, enjoy the next couple hours."

She headed downstairs to finish up in the kitchen. Sophie and I were coming out of the studio and saw Wynn coming down the stairs. I asked, "What are those three up to?"

Wynn laughed, "They were up to no go! So, I gagged them, put them in straitjackets with wands and tossed them into the cage for a long while. I'll let them stew for a couple hours, hopefully wear them out!"

Sophie asked Wynn, "Could you get my setup on the fuck machine?"

Wynn bowed and told her, "I can certainly do that Madam Sophie!"

I went back to my office to try and chip away at a bit more of the current project

I was working on. It was getting close to eleven and I was falling asleep, so I signed off and headed to bed. Upon entering the suite I noticed Sara was not in bed or anywhere else in the suite. I figured Wynn must still have her in the cage or she was going to spend the night with Lindsay. After changing into shorts and muscle tank I headed to bed. The next morning Sara was still not in the suite and figured her and Lindsay must have spent the night up in their special room. I headed to the kitchen and saw Lindsay and Sara at the island with Sophie assisting Wynn with breakfast. Lindsay saw me, "Morning Ron."

I replied, "Morning. Seems, y'all survived Mistress Lee's torture session! How about my sister?"

Sophie replied, "She'll be out shortly."

Later that morning I had resumed working on the same project when Wynn announced, "Lulu is holding on your office line."

I was hoping she was not having more issues as I was running a little behind on this project than I had preferred, "AZOutback, Ron."

Lulu replied, "Morning Ron. So our pest guy caught two rats from overnight and also patched the hole they were coming into the building. Everything appears to be working as expected now."

I told her, "Well, good glad we were able to get this taken care of quickly. Anything else you need?"

Lulu informed me, "Actually yes! A favor of sorts: Gary is still in Henderson, will be there likely until Monday or Tuesday next week. I have vendor coming in later today and wondering if you have any of your girls or your sister could be available to model."

I replied, "Yes, Laura and Sophie are still here. Sophie was just telling me last night she used to do fetish modeling for the group who bought the McGrawl's old club outside of Tucson. That would work well. What would they be modeling?"

Lulu explained, "Luxury Latex."

I laughed, "Come again, Luxury Latex? Sounds like an oxymoron to me."

Lulu agreed, "Yes, it would seem that way. But, what this vendor has is a lot different from what we've seen before."

I replied, "Well, suppose I can be proven wrong. I am assuming you want to do the modeling here and for me to do photos?"

Lulu confirmed, "Yes....wait....have I been to your new house?"

I thought for a moment with all the moves it was hard to keep track, "Well Fairy Duster and the original Acme House. Don't believe so with this one."

Lulu replied, "I don't think so either. Gary says you're right behind him?"

I explained, "Yes, but about a 1/8 of a mile north. So when you come in on Desert Oasis Parkway to the stop sign at Road Runner, you will make a left. After you go over the wash go to the first street on the right: Sagebrush. Follow the street all the way into the circle we are the house on the right-side with the wrap-around porch. Were you wanting to setup in the studio, the Grand Lawn or both?"

Lulu was noting my directions, "Okay...so opposite of where I go when seeing Gary...I am not sure. Hmm....I was going to bring her out tonight, but may be I should take a look at your place first. I can wine and dine her tonight then bring her over tomorrow afternoon."

I told her, "Far as I know Laura and Sophie will be here. Wynn will be as well. Don't know about Sara and Lindsay. Nonetheless, feel free to stop by and take a look."

Lulu confirmed, "Okay, I should be able to get away from the office in a couple hours. She's not due in until mid-afternoon."

Once I wrapped up with Lulu I paged Wynn and informed her of the news. Wynn stopped by office and dropped off a turkey sandwich with a side of grapes, "I know you are busy, but you should eat something. Your sister and Sophie went out to lunch and a movie, they'll be back for dinner."

Later on the door bells chimed and Wynn answered the door to find Lulu, who had not seen Wynn in her 'uniform' before, "Oh....nice outfit." She examined Wynn closer, "You're wearing one of Gary's chastity corsets?"

Wynn confirmed, "Yes, it is part of my work uniform. I believe it was his first prototype."

Lulu laughed, "Okay...seems a bit much for me, but to each their own. Myself, I'll stick with a standard chastity belt that happens to be equipped with dual conducting plugs and a clit probe." Lulu was getting excited seeing Wynn's outfit, a bit too excited as her clit became erect and made contact with the probe sending a shock through the plugs, "Oye!"

Wynn reminded her, "Sara seems to wear hers most of the time. I hear Peaches does too."

Lulu was not quite familiar with Peaches, "Peaches?"

Wynn explained, "Yeah Maya's partner, the manager at Vinnie's."

Lulu knew who Wynn was referring to, "Oh Ana?"

Wynn replied, "Okay, didn't realize she wasn't going by Peaches any more. Anyway, come with me and I'll let Ron know you are here." Lulu followed Wynn into the studio, "Take a seat in the studio and feel free to browse the magazines: Tech on the left, fetish on the right." Lulu headed over to the fetish magazines and Wynn came into my office, "Lulu is here. She's in the studio and appears to be gravitating towards your fetish magazines."

I laughed and told Wynn, "Well what ya expect? She works in the industry." I headed into the study and asked, "Anything interesting?"

Lulu replied, "Quite a bit actually. These old Playboy's are quite collectible. So this is the studio?"

I explained, "Yes. The lady who owned this house prior had this section added on to accommodate her yoga classes. Martina does a session in here every Saturday for family and friends."

Lulu laughed, "That bitch! She's never invited me, though I doubt I am flexible enough to do yoga."

I told her, "If Linda Holstein can, you can. So these chaise lounges can be moved along with the table, if need be. We can head outside to the Grand Lawn."

I opened the bi-fold doors and we stepped out. Lulu was stunned by the view, "Wow, here I thought Gary's place had a view." She noticed what appeared to be his house to the south, "Is that his place down there?"

I replied, "Yep. You can almost make out our old house. Should be more visible in the next couple months when the trees start dropping leaves."

Lulu looked around some more, "Wow, this will work great. I think we can come out around two in the afternoon if that works?"

I told her, "Would for me. Laura and Sophie went out this afternoon, but I'll confirm with them tonight when they get back."

That evening during dinner I ask Laura and Sophie, "You two plan on being here tomorrow afternoon?"

Laura replied, "As far as I know...why?"

I explained, "Lulu is going to be bring over a vendor and needs models."

Sophie was excited, "How nice!"

Laura told me, "Well, I suppose we will be then. Great, another opportunity for you to get blackmail photos of me!"

After dinner I went back to work on the project and was getting near the end. Tomorrow morning I would do a final check before sending a preview to the client. I headed to the suite to find Sara was up to no go. She was laying on the bed in a long line bra with fishnet stockings and had a prostate milker next to her. "Ah good, you wrapped up early. You are due for a milking....but, I am not removing your device. Going to drain you slowly from prostate stimulation only. Now strip, put on this gag and hood then get on the bed. Sara handed me my penis gag, a set of ear plugs and one of the sensory deportation hoods. After I put the gag on and ear plugs in, I was about to put the hood over my head Sara informed me, "I'll take care of lacing for you. However, do need to cuff your hands and attached them the d-ring on the front collar of the hood. Put your hands out." I put my hands out in front of me and Sara cuffed them then attached the cuffs to the hood. She then laced the hood tightly, stuffing the end of the laces into the hood then locking the collar. Sara laid me flat on my back and propped my leg up. I felt Sara's fingers trying to loosen my asshole then I felt the milker slide in. Over the next hour Sara slowly milked every last drop of cum out me. I was milked dry, but yet still horny from not having an orgasm. Sara undid the cuffs, but left the hood on me. She told me, "I might do more with you later."

I ended up falling asleep and woke up still gagged and in the hood. I had no idea what time it was or even if Sara was still in the room. I also had to pee and really didn't want try to make my way to the bathroom in the hood. I reached back and discovered the lock on the collar had been removed. I undid the collar and pulled out the laces to loosen the hood. The room was still dark and I could see the alarm clock on the nightstand it was around four in the morning. Sara was next to me sound asleep. I went into the bathroom and emptied my bladder. I found a pair of underwear and my bed shorts plus a muscle tank, putting those on before heading back to bed. Later that morning I woke up again to find it was little after eight and Sara had already left for the Budget Holstein. After removing the ear plugs and changing I headed to the kitchen to grab a bowl of cereal. Wynn saw me and commented, "About time you got up!"

I laughed, "Yeah, well Sara drained me last night so have no idea when I finally got to sleep. Anything I need to be aware of?"

Wynn told me, "Nope all is quiet. Laura went in with Lindsay and Sara to The Budget Holstein, but said her and Lindsay would return later when Lulu comes. What do you have going on?"

As I poured my cereal I explained, "Wrapping up on the project I've been working on this week. Going to do one last check before I send a preview link to the client."

Chapter 18: Luxury Latex and It's Settled!

Lulu called me a little after one, "We are on our way. I'd say about twenty-minutes."

I told her, "Should work. Laura is at The Budget Holstein, but I'll let her know you are on your way and she'll get a ride back with Lindsay. Sophie is still at the house." I wrapped up with Lulu and texted Lindsay informing her of Lulu's ETA. She replied back they'd be leaving shortly. I paged Wynn and informed her of Lulu's forthcoming arrival. Lindsay and Laura came into the house. Lindsay went to her suite to remove her belt and Laura went out to the Grand Lawn to talk to Sophie.

The door bells chimed and Wynn headed over to answer the door. She saw Lulu and an older lady with a large trunk, "Afternoon madam Lulu."

Lulu replied, "Afternoon Wynn. So for now we are going to setup in the studio. Is Laura back yet?"

Wynn confirmed, "Yes, her and Lindsay returned not long ago. Come this way and I'll let Ron know you are here." Wynn lead them to the studio and came into my office, "Lulu and company are here."

I came out of my office and met Lulu in the studio she introduced me to her vendor, "Ron, this is Celine she has the line of Luxury Latex we are hoping to have modeled today. Celine, Ron Merlot a good friend of Zac and Gary."

Celine spoke with a German accent, "Great to meet you. Both Gary and Zac have talked highly of you. So you are going to be taking photos?" I confirmed, "Ah okay...and you have models for me?"

I told her, "Yes I do. My sister, her assistant and then a friend of my wife. Wynn see if you can find Lindsay, I see Laura and Sophie are out on the Grand Lawn."

Celine asked Wynn, "Would you like to model? I have a purple catsuit which would look fabulous on you!"

Wynn told her, "I can give me a minute to take care of something." Wynn went to her suite to remove her armor and returned shortly later. Celine had setup a privacy screen for the girls to change behind. She handed Wynn the catsuit and she went to change. As she approached Laura was coming out in a form fitting latex dress, "Wow, nice!"

I had gone to get my camera equipment and did not know Wynn was modeling. Laura came out in the black latex dress and commented, "Never thought I'd ever wear latex but this is nice. Thicker than I expected and does not smell like a tire." I snapped a few pictures of Laura. Wynn came out next in the purple catsuit. Laura was amazed, "Wow, she looks good!"

I replied to Laura, "Yeah, purple is defiantly her color." As I was getting pictures of Wynn, Lindsay came out in a white sleeveless top and latex skirt. "Ah our angle has appeared."

Laura told me, "I could never pull that off. My hair and skin tone would just clash. Every time I see her in white I am amazed, especially with her natural blond hair."

As I was taking pictures of Lindsay I asked Laura, "You've seen her with dark hair?"

Laura told me, "Easter a few years back at Corona de las Estrellas." I looked at her puzzled, "I was in a dress with a chastity belt and thigh bands...Maya got drunk and..."

It all came back to me now, "Oh shit...okay yeah. Maya and Peaches had just come back from Chugwater after the fall out with her father...oh that same time Lindsay and Wynn had their little mishap a few days prior."

Laura confirmed, "I believe so. Wynn was on crutches...oh holly hell, would you look at Sophie!"

Sophie came out wearing a red catsuit. I joked to Laura, "La Diabla!"

Laura laughed, "I could just see her with a whip. Wouldn't want to mess with her!"

I added, "Be careful, Linda keeps trying to get me to barter exchange her for one. She tried that with Sara, but I was worried Sara might hurt Martina!"

Over the course of a couple hours Laura and Sophie along with Lindsay modeled more catsuits and dresses. Each girl got to choose an item of their liking as payment for their modeling services.

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Friday afternoon Laura received a phone call from The Cheetah's office. They informed her with the closing of escrow on their former house in Marana and the funds being transferred as agreed, their divorce was now settled. All that was left for her and Miss Kitty to appear at the Pima County court house. Laura was relived and yet overwhelmed. There was so much she was going to need to do now and was not sure when or how. She came into my office, "Can we talk?"

I looked up and replied, "Sure. What's going on?"

Laura smiled and told me, "It's Settled! Well almost, Miss Kitty and I need to go to the Pima County Court House to get the case closed."

I was relived as this had been dragging on much longer than expected taking a toll on both her and Sophie, "That's awesome. Now what?"

Laura laughed nervously, "That's what I need to talk about. I have no idea. When can you and Lindsay come out to Tennessee to help me out?"

I looked at my schedule and saw our annual Family Halloween event was coming up the next weekend, "Besides you two still needing to appear in court, next weekend is our annual Halloween event. Once we get past that, I am free. You will need to consult with Lindsay though to find out her availability. In the meantime, I'd suggest you let Kacie know you will be heading out the beginning of November so she can start ordering your stock. Might also want to check with Leslie and Miranda too. Especially Leslie as I am sure Sophie will want to start working at the Cafe as soon you get out there."

Laura replied, "But I need her to....oh wait...no, that is why I have Miranda. Okay, yeah that is a good idea Ron. So may be the Tuesday after Halloween? Guess, that means Sophie and I would be moving out of here."

I was thinking it will be nice to have the guest room back, but realized that her and Sophie would be back for Christmas and using that room. Mother and Blanche would stay in the FROG. I reminded her, "Yeah. Guess we have a pile of furniture waiting for us at your new place. Did Sir Finely finish your cage?"

Laura corrected me, "*Sophie's* cage. Last I heard from them they were getting ready to ship. So you are saying I should talk to Kacie first?"

I explained, "Yeah. She can give you a time line on when your inventory would be coming in. It is a much smaller store, so shouldn't take Lindsay as long to setup as the Gold Canyon or the new Thirsty Cactus. Of course too, you will need to work around her schedule since she is going to training you, Leslie and Miranda. Oh and don't forget we need to get your network setup, which I suppose you already have all planned out."

Laura admired, "This is embarrassing...but yes. I know how I am going to setup my network, yet I have no idea how I am going to arrange my furniture. Well, I'll give Kacie a call and find out more." After she left I checked my email and saw my client had replied with some feedback regarding the preview. I reviewed their feedback which was a couple minor corrections and additions. Simple items, I could knock out in a couple hours. I had lost track of time when Wynn announced 'Dinner!'

I marked my progress and stopped in the powder room before heading to the kitchen. Laura saw me and explained, "So Kacie is going to be out in Oro Valley the week after Halloween for staff training."

Lindsay added, "Which would mean I would be the second...or third if you count Linda even though she is 'retired' in charge so I wouldn't be able to leave until Kacie would return. But, as it turns out Kayré is going to stay here in Scottsdale, so I could go that week if we wanted to."

I explained, "May be not. Laura and I have a lot of work to do once we get out there. We need to get her network and computers installed, plus get all her furniture in place."

Lindsay explained, "Well, Leslie really wants me to go with her to look at the display racks and mannequins Buck's buddy has. I figure that is going to be a good half of day just to go out there and 'shop'. Then a couple more days just to get all the displays arranged. We are not even talking about stocking either."

I asked, "What is the status of the inventory for Laura's store?"

Laura told me, "Kacie has everything already in storage at The Holstein Ranch. Also told me the corset maker is getting caught up and should be shipping in another week. So when she gets down there that week, she will have it shipped out via Road Runner freight. It would be about a week for the items to arrive. If she has it all picked up on that Monday, we be looking at Friday or the following Monday."

I walked over to fridge and looked at the calendar Wynn had hanging on the side, "Hmm....well that would put us at the week of Thanksgiving. I know you wanted to open before, but do you think we'd be ready?"

Laura explained, "I had thrown out Thanksgiving just as a date off the top of my head. Had we not had the delays with the divorce, it may have worked."

Lindsay asked, "How about the Saturday after Thanksgiving? I don't think we want to try do a grand opening that Friday."

I told her, "Can always do a soft Grand Opening on that day with the official opening the following Monday. There is going to be a lot of foot traffic that Friday and Saturday, but we won't go all out and advertise until that Monday. Though, I have no idea how popular it is going to be. It is a new market, so it is not like when y'all opened the original Scottsdale location or Superstition Mountain." Laura and Lindsay started discussing more details so I headed to my office to get back to the project.

Later that evening Laura came to my office, "Miss Kitty and I have our court date set for next Wednesday around two. Would you mind taking me out to the courthouse?"

I laughed, "I have no idea where the Pima County courthouse is, let me look. Okay, so it is near the northern terminus of The Aviation Parkway. Not too far from I-10. I can do that."

Wednesday afternoon Laura and I headed back to Tucson and headed to the County Superior Courthouse. We met up with Miss Kitty and she asked Laura about Tennessee, "So now that we are getting this out the way, when are you heading to Tennessee?"

Laura told her, "Next Monday or Tuesday I believe. Ron has his annual Halloween party this weekend."

Miss Kitty joked, "What are you going as...a nerd or witch?" Laura just ignored her joke. The clerk informed them they were next and to head into their office. About 20-minutes later they returned and Miss Kitty told me, "She's all yours!"

I replied, "Oh joy!"

Chapter 19: Big Tennessee Plans and The Boutique Holstein

Since this was a smaller project and Sara was not coming along since she had to run The Budget Holstein at Thirsty Cactus, Wynn would remain at the house. Kayré would be staying at the house with Sara, Wynn and Andy. Kacie would come out the next week once she was done with Oro Valley. Once we landed at the airport, Lindsay called Leslie. As we were making the drive down to Franklin, Lindsay commented, "Sure is nice out here."

Leslie joked, "You and Andy should come out here, but I suppose you are attached to Arizona."

Before Lindsay had a chance to say anything I replied, "It could happen."

Lindsay turned to me and asked, "What is that suppose to mean?"

When we had returned last time I had taken a long look at our financial status. We still had the money from the Fairy Duster house sitting in a high-yield money market. The amount of money I was pulling in on the consulting gigs was insane, more than I made from the service agreements. Honestly, too I was getting tired of Arizona and how spread out things were. I told her, "What I said. I need to do a lot of due diligence on my end and I also need to negotiate some things too. So Leslie, once Laura and I are done with getting her place setup which we should be able to get knocked out tomorrow, I know you and Lindsay need to visit Buck's buddy." Leslie confirmed, "Can you see if Victoria can assist me this week? Also do you know if the Grossi property is still for sale?"

Leslie told me, "I can have her get in contact with you...as far as I know nothing has happened with the Grossi property."

I asked Lindsay, "You had mentioned before you and Andy could sell your shares of PC's and Things to Zina and Dunn...do you know what that amount would be."

Lindsay told me, "I would have to ask Andy. I can casually ask him, if you don't want me to tell him the real reason."

I replied, "Yeah and don't say anything to Sara or Wynn as well. This is all in the very early stages of planning and there is a lot details I need to work out. Also, if we do this it would likely be in July as we have semi-annual service agreements for Gary and Linda."

Laura asked, "What does that have to do with this?"

I explained, "The service agreement is we will do on-site service if needed. After the six-months are up then I can draw up new agreement that the service will be provided by my field contractor. Much like Boots in Frisco and even Boots Chugwater until the FTC seized Jed's business after his fraud convictions. I can still have a clause that if it is a major repair we can come out for an extra fee and take care of it. Upgrades would still be treated the same as they are now. Also, I am thinking new construction or even if I did pre-owned there is likely a lot I would need to do to accommodate us. Of course I think about all the money I put into the Fairy Duster house with the lower level and then the Sagebrush house as well with the FROG. Though, I did make more than I had expected from the sale

of the Fairy Duster house with all the upgrades. Hopefully, I can repeat my luck with Sagebrush."

Leslie commented, "You should talk to Victoria's husband, Victor. He's a General Contractor and does custom homes."

I told her, "Good to know, but I have my own contractor...oh wait I don't think Dundee is going to come out here...especially after him and Linda got married."

Laura had forgotten about that, "Oh yeah forgot they ran off to Cancun and got married. They were gone for a couple weeks too, Miss Kitty said it was so nice!"

I told Leslie, "Well...yeah let her know then."

We made it to the farm and Leslie told us, "You have about an hour before dinner."

Lindsay advised us she was going to call Andy and let him know we arrived. I gave Wynn a call, "Hey, we made it in. How's Sara doing without Lindsay around?"

Wynn laughed, "She has Kayré so she'll be fine."

I joked, "Someone else she can get into trouble with. Though it normally Lindsay that instigate things...ah much like Oro Valley many years ago. Lindsay is going to be busy with her sister, so she should manage to keep herself out of trouble."

As we were heading over to the main house for dinner Lindsay stopped me and told me, "So according to Andy our shares net out around \$75,000 each. I just told him since I had some free time I was working on our annual budget."

I laughed, "He bought that reasoning?"

Lindsay giggled, "Probably not, but he didn't dwell on it."

During dinner Charlotte asked, "Sophie when did you want to start working at the cafe?"

Laura told Sophie, "We should be able to get everything settled in the next couple days. So this is entirely up to you."

Charlotte explained, "We are closed on Mondays. We don't open until 7:00, but you can come in later if you want. Pretty much let you have flexible schedule if you need to."

Sophie told her, "I don't see a need for flexibility. Laura has Miranda to assist her with the store. I don't see us doing much if any type of computer related jobs out here. This is more to keep me occupied, especially since I won't have the modeling gigs anymore. If Laura is correct about us needing a couple days..."

Laura advised us, "Mainly it is getting our furniture arranged. Guess everything was put in the store front. Plus, we will need to go to Target to get bedding, housewares, linens and everything else we will need. The rest of our clothes Wynn will bring back when the rest of them come out for Thanksgiving in a couple weeks. Oh wait, I won't have a car until then."

Charlotte reminded her, "You are living above your store and there are other places such as hardware, general store and pharmacy very nearby and some will even deliver for a small tip. It is a very quick walk from your place to our cafe. We will work something out until then."

Sophie asked, "Anything special I need to wear?"

Charlotte told her, "We will provide you with a couple Cheshire Farms sleeveless t-shirts and long sleeve t-shirts as well. You need to provide your own black shorts or skirt as well as sheer black pantyhose or opaque black tights during the colder months. Oh and the shoes you can get at Target. They are a casual flat with memory foam insoles also in black."

Sophie told her, "That works. Let me get back to you tomorrow once I see how it comes along getting our place ready."

The next morning after breakfast we headed over to Laura's store. Upon entering we noticed all her furniture still wrapped and in boxes. Sitting near the rear door with a Finley Creations shipping label was a large crate. Laura commented, "Sophie your bedside table made it in. So Ron, how do you suggest we do this?"

I told her, "Let's get your beds done first, that way if something comes up those are done." It took us a couple hours to get the bedrooms done. We then focused on the living room. It was getting close to lunch time and we headed across the street to Taylor's for lunch.

Taylor saw us come in, "Hey Leslie, Abby, Ron and..."

Laura reminded her, "Sophie."

Taylor remembered now, "That's right. Haven't seen y'all in a while. Was wondering what happened."

Laura explained, "Yeah, my divorce took a little longer to settle than I had

expected. But, that is done now and I can focus on getting moved-in and the store setup."

Taylor handed everyone menus and told them, "Sit wherever you like. So, any idea when you are going to open?"

I replied, "Officially we are thinking the Monday after Thanksgiving. We likely will open for a bit that Friday and Saturday."

Taylor was excited, "That would be great! It is going to be so nice to have an active store in there again. It has been about a year now since they vacated."

I joked, "Anything we should know about? Haunted? Someone died?"

Taylor laughed, "Well, yes and no. The owner's mother became ill and they left suddenly. They had thought they'd be returning, but it turned out to be a lot worse than they expected and then they had a baby too. Last I heard they relocated outside of town. But, no...no one died in the store nor is it haunted...at least I don't think it is! Not sure how'd you check, suppose there's an app for that!"

After lunch Leslie advised us, "So Ron, Victoria is in her office this afternoon. Laura and Sophie need to go Target and I am guessing you don't really want to join them?"

Lindsay told Leslie, "Well, I will."

I told her, "Okay, so I can head over to her office. Any idea how long you guys are going to be gone?"

Sophie joked, "With the way you sister shops, may be middle of this week!"

Laura laughed, "So true! We have a lot to do at the residence still so hopefully later this afternoon."

Leslie handed me a key, "Since I don't think I am going to need this anymore you can take this and let yourself back in."

I took the key from Leslie and replied, "Sounds good. Suppose I'll assembled those bar stools when I get back."

Leslie left with Lindsay, Laura and Sophie and I walked over to Victoria's office. As I walked through the downtown I was really liking how close everything was to each other. I walked into Victoria's office and her assistant greeted me, "Welcome in. How can I help you?"

I told her, "Howdy, I am here to see Victoria. Is she back yet?"

Her assistant told me, "Oh you must be Ron Merlot. Leslie McKee did mention you would be stopping in. Yes, just go straight back."

I made my way to the back and knocked on the office door Victoria looked up, "Oh Ron. Good to see you again. So, Leslie mentioned something about you might be looking to relocate out here and might also be interested in the Grossi property?"

I explained, "Nothing is for certain yet and other than Abby, Sophie and Lindsay no one else really knows."

Once again I had forgotten Laura had introduced herself as Laura when Victoria asked, "Abby?"

I corrected myself, "Oh...sorry. Laura. She's been going by Abby when she got the job in Marana a few years back as they had another Laura in her department, though at the Las Vegas location. So at this point, just trying to feel things out. Leslie mentioned your husband is in construction?"

Victoria confirmed, "Yes, Victor does custom hones. You thinking going that route?"

I told her, "I have no idea. May be something pre-owned that we can re-work. That's what I've done with the last couple houses...well not so much the Acme House...but yeah."

Victoria informed me, "He did the Cheshire's barn that y'all been staying in, plus converted a building out at Miranda's place."

That was a good reference and demonstration of work, "Impressive, I liked the way the Cheshire's Barn is designed. That'd be neat, but would need something on a much larger scale."

Victoria had taken out a legal pad and was making notes. She asked, "How much larger scale?"

I laughed as I told her the sizes of the Fair Duster, Acme and finally Sagebrush house, "Though with Sagebrush I was not expecting The McGrawl's to move back in or Abby and Sophie staying with us for a month and half. At least I knew about Kayré and Kacie, until their building was done. So primary bedroom suite, a suite for Wynn, another suite for The McGrawl's, office for myself, an 'activities room' for Sara and Lindsay, plus we need a large area for a 'rec room'..."

Victoria giggled, "I know about your 'rec room'...Miranda told me about it...okay so we are at four or five bedrooms already. Do you or would you want your office as part of your main bedroom?"

I told her, "No. I want to keep it separate."

Victoria confirmed, "Yeah, the separation is always a good thing. Victor and I have our office on the other end of the house away from our bedroom. How many guest rooms?"

I told her, "At least two. Mother and her partner would come out, especially since she can see Laura. My sister-in-law and her partner might want to come out some time as well as Marc and Martina..."

Victoria laughed, "Ah yes, the famous Martina."

At this point, I was no longer surprised and joked, "Boy she sure gets around... you can take the girl out of the Honky Tonk..."

Victoria changed the subject, "What is your price point and time line?"

I told her, "All-in I'd like to stay around \$1.2 to \$1.3 million. Timeline is kind of fuzzy. As far as the business is concerned, we are obligated to do onsite repairs for a couple clients until the end of June next year. However, I don't foresee that needing to happen. I suppose worse case scenario we could fly out and take care of their issue. Really would like to avoid another Arizona summer if I can which typically starts around mid-May. As far as committing to anything the rest of the 'family' will be coming out shortly before Thanksgiving. Again, right now it is a matter of seeing this is even doable. If everything works out then I'll present the idea to the rest of the family and see what happens. I plan on being out here with Lindsay likely until the following weekend after Thanksgiving."

Victoria advised me, "That is a very healthy budget. You can get a lot for that out here."

I laughed, "Funny about 20-years ago you could say the same about Arizona, especially in the early 2010's after the housing market crash. Oh, we do want garage big enough for six cars."

Victoria made note and commented, "Likely would need to be custom built, so make sure we find a lot with plenty of space. Pool?"

I cringed, "Oh god no! The prior two houses had them. The Fairy Duster house Martina paid to have a pool added."

Victoria made more notes and told me, "So, give Victor and I a day or two. I have some properties in mind and he will be able help visualize what can be done. So, what about the Grossi property?"

I told her, "Oh yeah, that would be for Andy's computer store. What did it use to be and how long has it been empty?"

Victoria explained, "It was a sports bar, but the owner ended up shutting it down. Never really knew why and sold the property to a commercial investor who gutted it but, has not had much luck unloading it, so they could be motivated."

I told her, "Well, sometime this week I'd like to have Lindsay to take a look at it."

Victoria replied, "Yeah we can do that. As I said give us a day or two."

I told her, "That is fine. Laura and I need to work on getting her store ready. They all are at Target right now getting everything they need for their residence." I walked back to Laura's property and let myself in. I went to work unboxing and assembling the four bar/counter stools. Once I was done with that project I headed down to the storefront to take a look around and get an idea how we were going to get everything setup.

A while later Laura called my phone, "Hey we're back, you still at the Realtor's office?"

I told her, "No, I'm been back. Downstairs scoping things out." Laura asked me if I was done could I help them bring stuff in." I went out back and saw Leslie's truck was full, "Good grief Laura you bought out the whole store."

Laura laughed, "All I can say is the 5% off for using their store card really makes a difference. So, how did it go?"

I explained, "Pretty good. I am going to meet with her and her husband later in the week and they will show me some properties which might work. Well, let me start bringing stuff up and help you get ready. I am sure you and Sophie want to be able to get settled in and have your first night here."

We managed to get everything inside and get both the beds made up with sheets, blankets and quilts. The bathrooms just had the basics for now. It was getting close to dinner time. Leslie took us over to a nearby steak house for dinner. After we were done she dropped Sophie and Laura back at the house. Sophie asked Leslie, "Since we are still getting settled in, can I wait until Wednesday before I start?"

Leslie reminded her, "Yeah that is fine. I still need to get you some shirts from Charlotte or Dave. I'll bring those over tomorrow when I come get Lindsay to go see Buck's guy."

I told Leslie, "Suppose you can drop me off here then so I can help her get the network up and running. Plus I am sure Abby is going to need more help in the residence." Leslie, Lindsay and I headed back to the farmhouse. On the way back I asked Lindsay, "Okay, so I know you and Leslie are going to be going out tomorrow. Would you be free may be Thursday to look at the Grossi property with Victoria and I?"

Lindsay didn't see the connection, "What is the Grossi property and why would I want to see it?"

I told her, "It could very well be Andy's new computer store..."

Lindsay corrected me, "*Our* computer store, though I am not sure how much I would be doing there. This won't be like Scottsdale where they are near each other. Come to think of it, I haven't done that much with PC's and Things since we moved to Thirsty Cactus. I'll head over there once in a while to meet Andy for lunch, but not really doing anything anymore. Most of my time is focused with The Budget Holstein. Which has me thinking..."

Leslie warned me, "That is never a good thing, trust me I know!"

Lindsay brushed off her sister's comment, "Whatever! As I was saying *to Ron*: I've been thinking what about Sara and I's premier clients? Of course Ms Womack does like Kacie, which is more than I can say about Ms Bordeaux. We do have a couple interns that Kacie could hire to replace Sara and I. Of course that also means she would be having to work the store."

I reminded her, "Well, if we do this it would be June or July of next year before we moved out here. That would give enough time for Kacie and/or Linda to make arrangements. I'll deal with Linda initially so you don't have to. She owes me that much for all the grief she has put Andy and I through these past few years. You do know I did have dark hair at one time! But, then again she is the reason Sara and I met you and Andy. Anyway may be Thursday afternoon we can take a look at the Grossi property. I want you to come with me on Friday when I look at the properties with Victoria and Victor. This is going to be yours and Andy's house as well. Hopefully, we will be able to settle down here. Getting a bit tired of all this remodeling, moving then rinse and repeat."

Lindsay commented, "I miss The Fairy Duster house. This one we are in now is nice, but it is tight and spread out."

I laughed, "Yeah. Well, I bought it thinking it was just going to be Sara, Wynn and I. Had no idea you guys were going to move back in. If you two hadn't left, we'd likely still be at the Fairy Duster house. I kind of wonder if we should have stayed at the Acme House."

Lindsay recalled, "That place was interesting. Still had Maya and Peaches living with us then too."

I recalled, "Oh yeah, but once they moved out and Maya took her piano with her the place was way too big. That was the one with the casita you guys only slept in, never really used it as an office or living space."

The next couple days I helped Laura out with her residence and we got the initial network installed in the store. Tuesday afternoon Lindsay and Leslie returned with more clothing racks. For now we just placed them in a corner. I had forgotten about the cash wrap until I saw it over in another corner covered with a tarp. Was curious what Leslie did to it, but couldn't really get to it at that time. Tuesday night Leslie brought over a long sleeve t-shirt for Sophie, "Dave is ordering another long sleeve shirt for you and you can get the sleeveless t-shirts when you start."

Sophie took the shirt and replied, "Okay that works. I have the skirt, shoes and tights. You picking me up in the morning?"

Leslie told her, "Yes. When you wrap up tomorrow we'll walk back. Like I said it is a short walk, but this time of year..."

The next morning Leslie arrived to pickup Sophie in green 1956 Ford F-100 truck. Laura saw the truck, "Oh wow that is nice!"

Leslie explained, "Yes it is. Fully restored by Dave. It is a hobby of his, buy and flip classic cars."

Sophie joked, "Does he have a buyer yet?"

Laura reminded her, "Like we are going to have room for another car with my Caddy...which I am really beginning to wonder if I would use out here."

Leslie told them, "Not yet, he is almost done with this one. Still needs to lacquer the boards in the bed."

Laura told Sophie, "You are likely going to be doing more driving then I am....perhaps it is time for us to retire the Caddy..."

I added, "Gary might be interested being they have baby now. He has a 'classic'

Eldorado, but think that he uses that car when he is in Vegas. Linda was using it for a while, but then he drove it back to Vegas this last time he went out there.”

Laura joked, “You mean they didn’t strap a car seat to back of Bunny’s Harley!” She turned to Sophie, “If you want it, you can get it. Heck, I am not even sure if the Caddy would even fit in the garage.”

Sophie told Leslie, “Let him know I am interested.”

Leslie told her, “Will do! Okay, let’s get going...wouldn’t want you to be late on your first day...not that you really have a set schedule.”

Thursday after lunch Lindsay and I went over to Victoria’s office. She took us over to the Grossi property. As we were heading there she told Lindsay, “As I mentioned to Ron, this place used to be a sport bar. The owners ended up walking away and sold it to a commercial developer. The developer gutted the inside down to the four exterior walls with the exception of leaving the restrooms intact. So you pretty much have a blank slate. You can hire an architect or draw up your own plans. Victor does work with a commercial contractors, since he does only residential.”

We walked in and noticed it was indeed gutted inside. Lindsay look around and commented, “So this is about the size of the Gold Canyon location we opted not to do a couple years back. Seems rather large for our needs, but suppose we could ‘grow into it’ in the future. But, even then this seems so big...I just don’t see us needing this big of a store out here.”

I asked Victoria, “Could they divide it and sublet part of it? They are doing something similar at their Scottsdale location.”

Victoria told us, “They could, but that would require a variance which is a huge pain. But, then again you have a lot of time.”

Lindsay told me, “This would be a lot easier if you would let me tell Andy what is going on.”

I sighed, “I know, but I am not ready to do that yet. ”

Victoria assured us, “It has been sitting empty for the past few months and likely will continue to sit empty. I honestly don’t understand what the developer was thinking, he would have better luck had they left the kitchen. There are other commercial properties around here and now that I have a better idea of what you are looking for I may be able to find something smaller for you.”

I did not want to rush Lindsay into anything and told them, “So, Andy along

Wynn and Sara are not due out until the week of Thanksgiving. So we have another week. Tomorrow Victoria and Victor are going to show us some houses. Next week, she can show us some other commercial properties. That way when Andy comes out you have narrowed it down to a couple."

Lindsay seemed a little bit relieved, "Yes....that would work."

Friday morning Victoria and Victor met us at the farm house. Victoria introduced us, "Victor, this is Ron Merlot a friend of Lindsay McGrawl, Leslie's sister. So, the first place we are going to show y'all is a custom home that is almost complete."

We drove a few minutes outside of the downtown, but still fairly close. We walked in and Victor explained, "So, this would be at the upper end of your budget. Since this is custom, you can have whatever layout, finishes and pretty much anything else you want. However, that takes time...a lot of time. From initial design to full build out you are looking at 12-18 months"

I was shocked, "Holly...wow....um I don't think that time frame is going to work for us."

Victor added, "Yeah it is a long process. It takes almost as long to get all the pre-planning and permits done as it does the actual construction. You are looking at 9-12 months just for that portion. Once construction starts, it goes very quickly."

I politely asked Victoria, "Um...so what else do you have?"

Victoria laughed, "So I am guessing the custom home route is a hard 'no'! That's okay we have some pre-owned that we can show you and Victor has rendering of what we can do. Let's head over to the first one." We seemed to be heading the wrong direction and when we pulled up to the house it did not have much curb appeal. Victoria noticed my reaction, "Yes it is a little rough on the outside."

I joked, "Is it better on the inside?"

Victor chuckled, "Not really." I walked around the lot and noticed it was rather small and also noticed the rear portion of the house was boarded up.

I asked, "What happened here?"

Victor explained, "They had a small fire in the kitchen. It was contained to the kitchen, but there is lot of water and smoke damage throughout. Also keep i mind the asking price is about half of your overall budget. We are looking at another \$500K for renovations."

Victoria could tell I was not interested and joked to Victor, "Looks like this is

strike two.”

I told them, “It is more of the lot, being no where to really add a garage plus the location.”

Victoria told me, “The closer you are to downtown the more expensive it gets. Now there is a property not too far from the Cheshire's Farm. It is going to be a little more expensive, but it is a larger lot. It is going to take some work...”

I asked, “Is it as distressed as well?”

Victor explained, “Not really. There are some things that need to be repaired or replaced given the age of the property, but overall it is in good shape.”

Victoria told me, “Just go in with an open mind, it is a bit of funky layout.”

I laughed, “Hey I am used to ‘funky layouts’! The Fairy Duster house was very funky upstairs.” I turned to Lindsay, “You guys and Wynn never saw the old layout. There were two bathrooms between what became the Queen and King suites. Then there is the current house which is even more bizarre.”

Victoria commented, “Yeah Miranda mentioned she kept getting lost and going up the wrong stairs.”

I joked, “Yeah sure she claims she was getting lost! Oh and of course the ‘Acme’ House which the guy who traded it to Zac just kept adding on every time they had another kid. That place was a maze.”

Lindsay didn’t know the back story of The Acme House, “Oh, that explains a lot.”

Victoria told us, “Okay, well let’s head over and hope for Victor’s sake this won’t be a ‘strike three!’”

We headed closer to the downtown and even passed the Cheshire's Farm. There was curve in the road to the north which lead up a hill. We pulled up to a massive barn with another building attached. Victor explained, “So this barn is three levels, hoping that won’t be an issue.”

I told him, “Not at all. The Fairy Duster house was three levels. However, that was built on the side of a hill. From the street you would come into the middle level which was living space. From the rear it was the lower level which originally was just a bunch of garages. We did end up adding a suite on one side along with my shop....hmm forgot about my shop....”

Lindsay added, “...and Andy’s lab.”

I explained, "Yeah, he is using my current shop for his lab."

Victor added, "You mentioned you need a six-car garage?"

I told him, "The McGrawl's have two cars, we have two cars plus Sara's Roadrunner. Wynn has a Vespa scooter and we have our bike as well. The rest would be for storage."

Victor asked, "Would four tandem bays work? That would give you space for the five cars...I get the impression the Road Runner doesn't get out much, so that could be parked in one the rear bays. We could convert one of the bays into a shop/lab space for you and Andy."

I was thinking if I would even need a shop space, "Not even sure if I need a shop space. Have no idea if I am going to do installs out here."

Victor added, "You have the space and it really is not much more to go with a four tandem bay building than a three. Just saying..."

I advised them, "Well, let me think about that. Let's see the rest of this place."

Victoria told us, "Okay, so as we were saying the main barn is three levels. All the bedrooms are upstairs on the second level. The third level is an empty loft space which we would need some finishing which I assume you would use for your 'rec room'."

I replied, "Okay yeah that works. How many bedroom upstairs and what is downstairs?"

Victoria explained, "Five bedroom and four bathrooms upstairs. There three en suites and two standalone rooms."

I was thinking out loud, "Hmm..three suites; Primary for Sara and I, another from the McGrawl's and then an 'activity' room for Sara and Lindsay. Doesn't account a space for Wynn and that would leave me with one guest suite. Ideally, I wanted at least two. Plus, I need an office space too."

Victoria continued, "The ground floor is large great room/dining room and then the kitchen. There is small powder room behind the kitchen next to the laundry room."

Victor informed me, "There is a large 'Tack Room' they had added next to the kitchen. Here is a rendering of what I think we could do with that space. We'd take out this door and put in a cased opening from the kitchen. Then we can

convert that giant tack room into two bedrooms, a full bathroom, small sitting area then your office.”

I commented, “Ah okay, so I’d have a library then my office. What about a space for Wynn though?”

Victor told me, “Okay, so we are losing some space in the kitchen by opening this wall into the tack house. While it is a decent size kitchen it is small and congested. Let me ask you this; would you need a formal dining room if we built a long island in the kitchen to accommodate seating?”

I looked at the room, “I suppose so, but how would you fit an island in here?”

Victor explained, “We’d push this back wall out another two and half feet; then take out the dining room and instead reallocate that space to the kitchen and then the great room. Now on the other end of the kitchen where the laundry room, half bath and entry are we would reconfigure this area. So the tack house did not go the entire depth of the barn which now the bottom level is going to be another two and half feet deep....”

I looked at Victor’s rendering, “Oh so you are going to push that entire back wall out two and half feet?”

Victor confirmed, “Right, so that would be the old dining room and kitchen. As you can see we rotate the living room into part of the space where the dining room used to with the other half or so of the dining room being taken over by the kitchen. So, as you can see by the plans we’d leave the powder room where it is add a pantry on the outside wall. We’d remove the window as you don’t need one for a powder room. So now we have a place to put a new mud/laundry room and entry going towards the area where we’d have the garage building. So you would have the back facing wall with the fireplace and windows of the sitting room, cover porch, then beyond that would be small suite for Wynn. This will allow us to put a long and wide island which could seat around eight people.”

I was surprised, “Hmm...interesting...can’t really picture it, but the renderings do make sense.”

Victoria told me, “You have a lot of open land on that side of the house so we’d add a new driveway which would lead back to the garage building and then fork to the north to come into a turn-around next to the new side entrance.”

Lindsay commented, “You haven’t mentioned the asking price or what all this would cost.”

I laughed, “She’s right.”

Victoria told me, "Asking \$700K and you are looking at around \$400K to \$500K to do everything."

I was thinking this was still within in budget and the bulk I had sitting in the bank. Lindsay once again doing due diligence asked, "Does that include kitchen appliances?"

I commented, "Thank you Lindsay, that is a very good question."

Victor told me, "Yes. The upper end is if you went with the best of the best for everything, appliances, finishes, flooring, fixtures as well as the garage building. As far as build time, we are looking at about four or five months once everything is approved."

I added, "This would be a 'cash' purchase if that makes a difference."

Victoria added, "That makes a big difference. The seller may be willing to accept a little less and we can do a 10-day escrow."

Victor advised us, "So if you close say end of November we submit the plans to the city we could start first of the year. Heck, we could do demo upon closing upon being issued a demo permit. You'd be looking at around May or June depending if there is anything unexpected. From my inspection of the property, I don't see anything unusual; we will need to get an engineer to look over us changing this back wall. We'd require some post and beams, but since that wall is going to be cabinets, primary sink and oven we can blend it in and make it look like an architectural feature. The island would have a smaller prep sink as well as dishwasher, microwave and more storage."

Lindsay being Lindsay asked, "How about a wine fridge?"

I laughed, "Yes, that is a very important for our family!"

Victor commented, "Yeah, we can fit a wine fridge into the island. That island is going to be nearly fifteen feet long and six-feet deep so there is plenty of space. You can have six people seated facing into the kitchen and two people on one side.

Victoria explained, "Upstairs we really are not going to do much. Some minor repairs and updates. Let's take a look." We headed upstairs to the second floor. Victoria continued, "So on the north and south ends we have the big primary suites. Here at the top of the stairs in front of us is another suite, but on a smaller scale. The landing for the stairs here is between the two bedrooms. There is a regular bathroom to the right beyond the bedroom. A linen closet does offer

a buffer between the bathroom and the primary suite there, though I do believe the 'shared' wall is actually part of the bathroom."

Lindsay asked, "The two primaries, is one bigger than the other?"

Victoria explained, "Foot-print of the space they are the same, however the bedroom portion of the northern one is a little smaller being that suite has soaking tub and free standing shower. The southern suite that bathroom just has a shower. The same goes for the suite across the stairs, just a shower."

Lindsay commented, "You know I don't think we need a bathroom in our activities room. I know the one we have currently does...as did the Fairy Duster house."

I reminded her, "Yeah and that is only because those were supposed to be guest rooms. So...wait we have five bedrooms up here?"

Victor confirmed, "That correct."

I told Lindsay, "Well, suppose you guys can have an office in this house."

Lindsay laughed, "Which we will likely never use...has Andy used yours at all?"

I thought for a moment, "Um....nope. Laura did use his computer a couple weeks ago to check her email to e-sign the escrow documents."

Lindsay added, "When we do our weekly meetings, we're in the studio with tablets. I'll use my laptop in the kitchen to keep Wynn company on the few times I am working form home. Likely would do the same here. Not sure about Andy, doubt he going to use it."

I told her, "Well, you have an office if you need one. We don't have to go crazy furnishing it...which brings me to a point I need to make if we do this, we are not going to bring most of our furniture."

Lindsay objected, "But, we paid for those chaise lounges in the studio."

I told her, "Oh, I want to bring those. As well as the bedroom set up in the FROG. I'll have Gary ship those with all our 'toys'. What about the chaise in the FROG?"

Lindsay laughed, "Oh the burgundy chaise? Seems to me it would stick out if we put it with the others..."

I suggested, "Or you can put it in your office. That way if you need to make a phone call and need somewhere private."

The light bulb went off in Lindsay's head, "Ah okay....yeah that works. Would we have to make another trip out here to buy furniture?"

I explained, "No, the place we get all our furniture will ship anywhere in the country. Laura just happened to visit their Nashville store since she was out here. So we will go to the store out in Gilbert pick up what we like and have it all delivered here. I'll likely come out a week before the rest of you to get things taken care of here. Don't want a situation like Laura's where everything was just delivered to her store front." We looked at the rooms and the bathrooms did need some minor updating. I asked Victor, "The figure you quoted us does that include bringing these bathrooms into this century?"

Victor confirmed, "Yes it does. The only thing it does not include would be whatever you want to do on the third level."

I advised him, "Well let's head up that way and take a look." I looked around, "Where are the stairs?"

Victor laughed as he walked towards a door next to the suite at the front of the barn, "Behind door number five!"

I laughed, "Okay....how much to remove the door?"

Victor told me, "Not much to delete the door and re-frame the opening."

We headed up the stairs which turned to the left and continued to the old hay loft. I was really surprised how finished it was, "Oh wow, was not expecting this. I was thinking it was going to be unfinished."

Victoria told us, "My understanding is it was at one time. The previous owners had it finished and the kids and their friends used it as a gaming room."

Victor explained, "There is spray foam insulation between the roof sheeting and the shiplap, which is why the temperature is so nice in here. There also a couple mini-split systems on each end. The rest of the barn has central A/C and heat. You do have that fireplace in the living room and the one in the tack room."

Lindsay got excited, "Oh that would be neat when we do our weekly meetings come fall. When is fall out here? It is like December as it is in Arizona!"

Victoria laughed, "You actually have a 'fall' thought it was summer all year long."

I told her, "Nope, except our 'fall' usually lasts a month before winter sets in. Spring by mid March and summer by the end of May. It is a running joke that 'patio season' in Arizona starts around Labor Day when it is finally cool enough to

use your patio." I turned to Lindsay, "So you would be doing the meeting here?"

She explained, "Laura's office is a slightly enlarged broom closet and she does not have one at her residence. She'll likely do them with Miranda in the main store, but I think she'd rather do them here...plus gives them an excuse to use the 'rec room'"

I told her, 'Makes sense, much like Martina doing the Yoga sessions at our current house" I looked around the loft, "So, I noticed we have these hideous and energy hogging florescent pot lights..."

Victor explained, "That's an easy fix. Just put in LED bulbs. Nothing else needs to be done."

I laughed, "Oh okay, thought transformers would need to be swapped, guess I am thinking traditional florescent not CFL. How difficult to add a small powder room up here?"

Victor joked, "Depends on what you are willing to spend. Honestly, can't tell you at the moment. Once you purchase then I could start opening up and seeing where the plumbing is located. I have an idea based on where the middle suite is below, but not sure if you would want the powder room in the middle of the area. It would likely be next to the stairs."

I asked, 'What about the other suites?"

Victor explained, "The loft does not go over those. You noticed the gabled windows on the sides."

I understood, "Okay. Should work. Still need a storage closet and couple dressing rooms, so those can go in that area. The powder room doesn't need to be very big just a sink and commode. Okay, we've seen the house top to bottom now, what next?"

Victor told us, "Outside." We headed outside and I looked around. Victor continued, "So, we will do all new cedar siding on the lower portion of the back which we are extending out. Now, we have a couple options here as to how we do the roof over the extended portion We could simply do a sloped roof from below the second floor windows to the new section. However, it is going to be bit of sharp angle. Since you have all this space, I was thinking we could add another four or five feet to create a covered rear porch. Set out some rocking chairs and take in the view of the trees and hills."

I liked the idea, but of course wondered, "How much extra would that run?"

Victor explained, "Hard to say. There is going to be more excavating needed and more decking to create the porch."

Lindsay commented, "There is really no area to sit out like we have now."

I was still trying to understand where Wynn's suite would be, "We can come back to that. The new section, where would that be and wouldn't that take up part of this back wall?"

Victor explained, "No. We are not building anything off the back of the existing barn other than the extended kitchen. The new mud/laundry room is going to be in the southeastern part of the existing kitchen behind the powder room. As soon as you come in from the south porch you come into the mudroom. To the right is a small hall which leads to the stairs. On the right side of this hall will be Wynn's suite. The laundry will be off the mudroom. The east side of her suite will line up with the barn. There will be a couple feet gap on each side of the new porch in relation to her suite and the sitting room. If you do go with the deck/covered porch option we can add some doors from the kitchen to the deck. Then we can do a patio beyond that with an outdoor kitchen and seating area."

I was confused, "I thought the garage building would be over there."

Victor showed me the general plan, "No the garage will be by the extended driveway on the east side. Also that building will sit beyond the back of the barn and fairly close to your eastern property line. We will build out the driveway from the building to the mudroom entrance. Let's walk and I will show you. Once you purchase this place then I can come out and start marking where the new additions are going to be, so it will make more sense. It is one thing to see it on paper than it is in person."

Lindsay joked, "Oh much like Boot's Chugwater...It looked so much smaller on paper!"

I laughed, "Yeah I know, much like Jason's building in Frisco...which you never saw." I saw the confusion of Victor and Victoria so I explained, "Boot's Chugwater was a project we did many, many years ago for my now incarcerated father-in-law out in Wyoming. Anyway it was huge production facility and they gave me a paper rendering which I swear were not to scale as when we walked in the first time it was so much bigger. Lindsay is here rubbing it into my face much like a project I had to call her husband out to help me with in Texas."

Victor asked, "Anything else you need to know?"

I told him, "No, I think we are good. Like I said the rest of the family will be out before Thanksgiving. Not sure yet when, but I will let you two know so we can

show them and then take it from there.”

Victoria told us, “If you two have time, there is another commercial property we’d like to show you. It is in the ‘downtown’, but much smaller.”

Lindsay told me, “I am fine if you want to.”

I asked, “Where about in the downtown.”

Victoria told us, “The block behind Taylor’s. On that block the west side is commercial only and single level, just as it is on the other block on Taylor’s side. The east side is the two level and mixed residential commercial.”

I told them, “I am fine with that.” We headed back into downtown to the other street and noticed it was the same setup; with divided road with parking in front of the store and alleyway in the rear.

Victor added, “It is a sort of a corner building since there is a pedestrian access on the north.”

Lindsay asked, “Pedestrian access to what?”

Victoria replied, “To the block where Abby’s store and Taylor’s are.”

Lindsay commented, “Oh so, then I could easily go between the two stores.”

I added, “Much like you do now.”

Lindsay added, “Our old location the stores were closer together, but still they are close now at Thirsty Cactus.” We walked in and Lindsay got really excited, “Oh wow, this layout reminds me of our very first store in Tucson. Gosh, Andy and I were just starting out. Such an exciting time. No frociking Fountain Hills store, just that one store. Then we expanded that location, then bought another store, then another...then we bought the lounge...all was going great until Gerald made that shady deal with Andy and we ended getting kicked out Pima County and had to sell everything. It would be so nice to start fresh and simple. I know Andy is tired of the ‘chain’ stores even if it just two.”

I was curious, “What name would use?”

Lindsay explained, “Andy say we don’t own the rights to *PC’s and Things*; Doyle and Max do. So we may go with our original McGrawl Innovation Systems or MIS for short. Yeah, I think this would work really well...now just to convince Andy.”

I reminded her, “Andy I am not concerned about, if I have faith in this he will

too.”

Lindsay appreciated my honesty, “That’s good to know...but then who are you concerned about?”

I told her, “Sara.”

Chapter 20: Sophie’s New Ride and What Might Actually Be!

Saturday morning Dave and Sophie went over to the local DMV to complete the sale of the F-100 pickup. Laura and I gave Gary a call, “Hey Gary Ron...” Laura made her presence known. “Say, Laura here has decided she doesn’t want to bring the Caddy to Tennessee.”

Laura explained, “Yeah, Sophie ended up buying a restored 1956 Ford F-100 pickup from Charlotte and Dave. I really won’t need a car given I am living above my store and most everything is close by. Besides, I am not even sure it would fit in the garage on my property.”

Gary told her, “I’d be interested in purchasing it. We could use a ‘family car’ as the Eldorado I use in Vegas when I wine and dine vendors out that way. If it is okay with you, I can come by later and take a look and we can work something out.”

I advised him, “Well Laura and I are still in Tennessee getting her store ready. I’ll let Wynn know and Laura can let her know the details. Laura has the title with her, she can sign it over then get it notarized and FedEx it over to you. She can have Wynn brokerage the sale.”

Gary replied, “Yeah that will work.”

I called Wynn, “Hey, so Gary is going to be by later on to look at Laura’s Caddy. She has decided she doesn’t bring it out with her.”

Wynn commented, “Saves her fortune on gas by not having us drive it out there. What is she going to do though?”

I explained, “Well, remember she lives above her store and everything is so close here in the downtown. Dave restores and flips classic cars and his latest project is a ‘56 Ford F-100 pickup. Sophie end up buying it. Guess it will be her daily driver to and/from the Cafe. Also, there is the matter that Laura doubt’s the Caddy would fit in her garage. Anyway, she want’s you to handle the deal. She has the title with her, we can get it notarized on Monday and sent over via FedEx if you make a deal with Gary.”

Wynn replied, "Okay that works. I'll let her know how it goes. So we are going to leave next Saturday and likely will get out your way by Monday evening. We'll keep you updated."

Later in the day Wynn called Laura with Gary's offer, she told Wynn, "You know better than I do. If that is a good price then tell him we have deal. Ron and I will take care of the title on Monday. I believe we have another set of keys here, I'll send those back with Ron and Lindsay when they return."

Gary and Wynn reached a deal for Laura. On Monday we went to a local bank to get the title opened. I also inquired about opening accounts for myself the business if we did move out here. I'd likely still keep my AzMu accounts for a while since all my direct payments were linked to those accounts. Monday afternoon a full Road Runner freight truck arrived at Laura's store and left empty. Laura told Lindsay, "Well, the merchandise is here. Time for you to work your magic."

Lindsay laughed, "So at least this time I will have more than couple days. But, this doesn't look as bad as Superstition Mountain was. Of course, I had Kacie along with Jojo, Sadie and her sister helping me."

Laura asked, "Speaking of Kacie what happened to her? Wasn't she suppose to be coming in this week?"

Kacie had called me earlier that morning, "Oh yeah, she called earlier said she wasn't expecting to make it out until later this week. Seems things took longer than expected in Oro Valley. She said she'll fly out over the weekend and get a rental car and hotel."

Laura replied, "Well, that gives us a little more time. Anyway Lindsay, Ron and I will help you. I really need to familiarize myself with the merchandise anyway. Miranda will join us starting Wednesday."

We spent the rest of they day getting the boxes opened so we could see what we were working with."

Tuesday morning after breakfast Leslie dropped us off at Laura's store. Later in the morning my cell was ringing. I was expecting it to be Wynn or Gary...however it was our Mother, "Hello Mother."

Lorena asked, "You and Sara coming down for Thanksgiving?"

I told her, "No. However, we will all get together for Christmas at my place. I'm out in Tennessee with Lindsay getting Laura's new store setup. Andy, Wynn and Sara are coming out sometime next week to join us."

Lorena was surprised, "Oh, hadn't realized you were out there. Hmm....well...could we come out?"

I was surprised and thought for a moment, "Well, there are four rooms at the farm house...just not sure if Dave and Charlotte would be okay with more people. Let me talk to them and get back to you. When would you be out?"

Lorena told me, "We'd fly out from Tucson on Tuesday or Wednesday. Don't tell Laura, we'd like it to be a surprise."

Great yet another surprise, "Okay, I can do that. I'll get back to you later." I stepped out and called Dave, "Hey Dave, got a question for you. So my mother and her partner have decided they want to surprise Laura and come out for Thanksgiving."

Dave laughed as he told me, "Well, there would be room in the farm house for them."

I replied, "I know that. Just not sure if you and Charlotte are okay with having two more for Thanksgiving dinner, especially on such short notice."

Dave told me, "Oh, no she'll be fine. We'd gladly host a couple more people. Speaking of which, when is the rest of your family supposed to be coming?"

I told him, "From what I understand, they're leaving on Saturday. Wynn said Monday or Tuesday."

Dave again assured me, "Yeah that will work. Do you know when your mother and her partner are coming?"

I replied, "Tuesday or Wednesday, They are going to fly out from Tucson."

Dave told me, "That works. Let us know if you need a ride to the airport to get them."

I reminded him, "We should be okay as I should have my Murano before they come. I'll let you know either way." I called my mother back and Blanche answered, "Hey Blanche, Ron here. So, The Cheshire's are fine with you two coming out next week. Just let me know when you plan on coming out so someone can meet you up at the airport. I need to get back inside before Laura gets suspicious, but then again she probably wouldn't even notice I am not around with how busy she is getting her new store setup." Just as I was about to go back in I got a text from Wynn advising FedEx had delivered the title for Laura's Caddy and her and Gary were going to go over to a local third-party MVD

vendor to take care of the transfer. As I came back in Laura commented she was looking me. I told her, "Oh, Wynn called to tell me she got the title and needed to know where the third-party MVD vendor was located."

Thankfully Laura bought that reason, "Oh goody! I no longer have to deal with that Caddy anymore...not that I really did anything as Sophie took care of everything. Anyway, it is getting close to lunch time. Leslie says there is a good burger place over on the next block."

I laughed, "We'll see about that. I don't think anything can compete with The Chuck Wagon place in Carefree." We walked over to the next block to the burger place Leslie had recommended. We walked in and it looked like a country version of the place in Carefree. An hour later we were all very well fed and let impressed. I declared, "Well, that was certainly good. Gives my place in Carefree a run for its money. Good to know this is here."

By Friday we had most everything setup. We would teak the layout next week as well as get the rest of Laura's network setup so Kacie would be able to start training Miranda and Leslie. Saturday morning Wynn called and said they were leaving. That evening she called and said they were staying the night in New Mexico. Sunday night she called to tell me they made into Oklahoma City and they would be leaving early the next morning to get in before the afternoon rush. Monday morning Kacie called me asking for directions to the store so I had her talk to Miranda.

Kacie arrived an hour later and walked in, "So love this area. This is what Thirsty Cactus should've been, but they can't do anything right in Scottsdale. So, what is left do here?"

Laura advised, "Ron and I are wrapping up on the WiFi in the store and Lindsay is making some final tweaks to the layout."

Kacie walked around and saw the cash wrap counter, "Oh wow, that is really neat. Where did you find this?"

Leslie walked over and explained, "A friend of mine deals with architectural salvage." She showed Kacie a picture of the 'before', "It was black when we got it, mostly dirt but it had also been painted prior. I ended up sanding it down and then applying a couple coats of lacquer to bring out and yet protect the patina."

Kacie was amazed, "That turned out really well. I like this, nice size. Miss Holstein keeps going bigger and bigger. She's talking about expanding The Gold Canyon store, but hopefully I've talked her out it. Bigger ain't always better!"

I laughed, "How the hell does she plan on going bigger with that store?"

Before she could answer Wynn called, "I believe we are about an hour from the farm."

I told her, "Okay. Still working on things over here. I'll let Dave know to expect you." I called Dave and relayed the info.

Just as I was about to get back to work when our Mother called, "AZ Outback, Ron?"

Based on my greeting mother knew I was in the store with Laura, "Oh hey. We opted to take a flight on Wednesday morning. We should be in around 2:00 PM your time on Wednesday."

I told her, "Okay, I see. That is fine, I'll get things taken care of. Thanks for letting me know."

Laura just assumed it was business and didn't question the call. Once Kacie saw I was done she replied, "She wants to see if she could get one of the suites next to her or else get something bigger. I've told her we don't need to expand the store we are doing fine with the space. May be thin out the product line a bit instead."

Over the next couple hours we got the last of the WiFi setup. I told them, "Let's call it day. Need to get back to the farm Wynn, Andy and Sara should have arrived now. Lindsay and I are going to be busy tomorrow, I might be able to get out here in the afternoon."

Leslie took Lindsay and I back to the Cheshire's farm house. During dinner we chatted about the Boutique Holstein and mentioned the conversation Kacie and I had in regards to Linda and the Gold Canyon Store. Andy laughed, "She's falling into the trap we did in Tucson. We kept getting bigger and more stores. I am so glad we passed on Gold Canyon, it would have been too much to manage. Fountain Hills is bad enough, yet it is our better performing of the two stores. Zina has been amazing, so nice to have a person who knows how to run a store."

After dinner while Wynn, Sara and Lindsay were out with the grandkids and Andy was occupied with Dave I made a quick phone call to Victoria, "Ron Merlot here. So the rest of the family arrived earlier. I am thinking tomorrow morning after breakfast."

Victoria told me, "How's 9:00 we can meet you at the property?"

I told her, "That works for me. Should anything change I'll let you know."

The next morning during breakfast I told everyone, "So Lindsay and I have been

working on a project out here for the past couple weeks. We will take a little trip after breakfast." After breakfast we all got into the Murano and I headed over to what could be our new home. I asked Andy, "Andy, remember when we were here in August and you had said it would be nice if we could settle out here?"

Andy recalled, "Yes and you told me it was not possible because of your work as well as Lindsay and Sara with their clients."

I explained, "Well, my work has changed a lot since then...yes I know it has only been a couple months. However, these online triage/design gigs are netting me about 70% of my income now. Another 20% comes from service agreements and the remained from small in person jobs. Gary and Linda are currently in contract with us for onsite service until December 31st this year. However, I expect both them to accept the six-month renewal offers I sent out the beginning of last month putting them to June 30th of next year. In April next year, I will send out a new offer with a clause that onsite service would be handled by the field contractor. That is the agreement I have with Jason Jason and several of my clients in Vegas. If it is something beyond his scope or an upgrade I can come out for a fee."

Andy asked, "So you are saying we are going to come out here?"

I told him, "May be. There is a lot of moving parts and there still some unknowns such as Sara."

Sara asked, "What do I have to do with this?"

I explained, "Not sure how willing Linda is going to be to have you transfer to Abby's store, being you have Miss Bordeaux. I know her and Kacie do not get along."

Sara laughed, "Well in a couple months Miss Bordeaux is moving back east to be with her daughter who is expecting. So, she won't be coming out Scottsdale anymore."

Well that made things a little easier, "Interesting. That will make dealing with Linda a little easier. Okay, so we are here and it looks like Victoria and Victor haven't arrived yet. Keep in mind I have not purchased this, nor have I committed to this property. Victor is Victoria's husband and also a general contractor. I will also add, that if we go forward with this we would not be out here until June or July next year. Again, with the service agreements we have with Linda and Gary; plus construction would take about 4 to 5 months. Keep an open mind when we tour this place, especially on the ground floor. The upper floors were are not going to do as much, just some repairs and updates. As well as some minor additions with the 3rd floor." I saw Victor's SUV coming up the

road, "Okay, it looks like they have arrived."

Victor and Victoria parked behind us and Victoria apologized, "Sorry we're late Victor had forgotten a couple of the renderings."

I told her, "No issues, gave me a chance to pitch this." Victor walked over and introduced him to everyone else, "This is Sara, my wife; Andy McGrawl, Lindsay's husband and Wynn, my business manager as well as our housekeeper/chef and more."

Victor replied, "Pleasure to finally meet you all. So let me give you a quick run down what he have currently. This barn is three levels with five bedrooms and four and one-half bathrooms. All five bedrooms are on the middle floor with three being full suites. Now attached to the side here is an oversize 'tack room' which we will convert into five rooms. Two bedrooms, a bathroom, a sitting area and an office space for Ron."

I explained, "These new bedrooms will be two additional guest rooms for a total of three. The third suite on the second level will be a guest suite as well."

Wynn asked, "So I won't have a room downstairs then?"

Victor told her, "You will. I'll explain more once we get inside." We headed inside and Victor continued, "We are going to gut the entire bottom level with the exception of the half bath down here. So this door here leads to the tack room addition. We will take out the door and create a cased opening that will lead into the sitting room with the existing fireplace. Ron's office would be to the right here and ahead of us would be the two guest rooms and a bathroom. We are going to do away with the formal dining room and reconfigure the living room and entry here. In the kitchen this back wall is going to be pushed out three-feet for the entire length of the barn. By doing this we can add a massive island which can sit around eight people. Oh Ron, have you decided about the covered porch?"

I told him, "Yes, let's do that. We can scale back in other areas if needed, but even then I don't think we are going to with super high-end finishes. Wasn't the wall suppose to be two and half feet?"

Victor explained, "Yes, but by going three feet and also adding the covered porch will make the roof pitch better. This old 'back door' which is on the side will stay, but we are going to build a portico out to about the length of where the sitting room would be. This will be a couple feet away from the tack room. Then we will have another couple feet buffer from the porch and add on in this corner here another suite for Wynn. So when you come in this door, you will come into a mudroom/laundry room which will have a hall off to the right leading to the stairs. Across the stairs would be the entrance to Wynn's suite. The other side of

the mudroom leads into kitchen. I have renderings to make it a little bit easier to understand." He handed out a set of renderings to all of us.

Lindsay was looking over the renderings and saw the plot plan. She noticed the placement of the garage building, "Hmm... I was under the impression the garage building was going to be behind here not on the side."

Victor explained, "The lot is wider than it is deep and while we could put the garage building in the rear, the driveway would take away from your patio area. Oh while we are on subject of that, I do understand you would want a grill and perhaps a hot tub?"

I laughed, "Funny thing about that, the place we are now has a pad and hookup for a hot tub, but we don't have one. Just seems odd thing to have in my part of Arizona."

Victor understood, "Yeah I guess so. Since we are doing the porch, will need to get with you one what type of door you want from the kitchen onto the porch. Anyway, let's head upstairs...this part should go much quicker."

We went up to the second floor. Victoria explained, "As I said earlier there are five bedrooms and four bathrooms up here."

I told Andy, "Lindsay has already laid claim on the south suite because of the soaker tub."

Victor added, "You know, Ron I might be able to adjust they layout of the bathroom in the other suite that we could put in a cast iron claw foot tub."

I added, "Sara would love that. Especially being cast iron."

Sara was clueless, "Why? What difference does it make?"

Victor explains, "Huge, your bath will remain hotter for much longer as the radiant heat of the water is retained by the cast iron which in turn keeps the water warm. These modern day acrylic and fiberglass tubs just dissipate the heat instead of retaining it. We just need to make sure the floor structure below is built up to support the weight. Plus, it will look like it as always been there versus a modern acrylic tub."

I reminded them, "The middle suite here will be a guest suite. So across the hall here these two rooms, one will be Lindsay and Sara's activity room while the other will be an office for The McGrawl's."

Andy asked, "Would we even need an office? Heck, I am not even sure what I am

going to be doing out here.”

I told him, “Lindsay and I will get with you on that shortly. We can just put a writing desk and chair in there along with the burgundy chaise lounge.”

Andy had not seen that lounge, “Burgundy? I thought the ones in your studio were a cream color.”

Lindsay told him, “There is a third chaise, it is up in the FROG. Beside, we would have a room to display our collections and somewhere to go if we need to make a phone/video call or do something private. Otherwise, I’ll likely be in the kitchen or maybe sitting room with my tablet.”

Andy asked, “And what are you going to be doing out here?”

I told him, “That is kind of dependent on the next part which we will get to soon. Let’s finish off by showing them the loft which would be our future ‘rec room’.”

Sara looked around, “I don’t see stairs leading up.”

I laughed, “Yeah, that will be taken care of. Victor, show them what is behind ‘door number five!’”

Victor opened ‘door number five’ revealing the stairs to the third level, “Oh by the way, Ron, very likely were going to have to rebuild these stairs as they may not up to code.”

I told him, “Yeah, kind of figured as such given how steep these are.”

We headed up to the third level and Wynn commented, “Well this is a surprise, wasn’t expecting it to be finished up here.”

Victoria explained, “So the previous owners had a couple teenagers who were big into video games. Parents decided they and their friends needed a space other than the living room, so they finished off this room.”

Victor added, “So you may be wondering how they got away with not changing the stairs. Because they did not make any structural changes to this space they did not need to bring the stairs up to code. A weird technicality as the way it is now it is not considered a living space. However, once you add the closet and bathroom up here then it is considered a living space and as such we will need to redo the stairs.”

I asked, “What is that going to run me?”

Victor told me, "Likely nothing as it should fall within the contingency budget you have. So I thinking we will curve the stairs to the left about three feet from the existing turn. From here we can have the powder room and a closet. Then on the other side of the wall have a couple dressing rooms. This way too, you still have the natural light from the gable windows on both ends. Well, that pretty much wraps up this place."

Victoria asked, "What do you want to next Lindsay and Ron?"

Lindsay asked me, "Should we even bother showing him The Grossi property?"

I replied, "To be honest, I really think it would too big. Besides the downtown location is not only a better size but better location too."

Lindsay agreed, "Yeah, kind feel the same way. Okay, Victoria let's eliminate The Grossi property."

Victoria replied, "Okay then, if we are done here we'll meet you at the other location."

Once we were back in the Murano, I explained to Andy, "So, back to your earlier question. We are about to go look at a retail only space that Lindsay and I both think would work great for you to 'start over' with your own computer store. It is a block to the east of Abby's store. The nice thing about the location is it next to the pedestrian pass-thru connecting the two 'main' downtown streets. So you will get a lot of foot traffic, but also Lindsay could easily go between your store and Abby's store."

Andy suddenly understood why Lindsay had asked him about the buy-outs, "Oh, so this *is* why you were asking me about our buy-outs. I thought it was a little odd you would be working on the budget while out here. Certainly explains things."

Lindsay told Andy, "Well, Ron wouldn't let me tell you what was going on, so I had to get creative as to why I was asking you. As far as the store, when I first walked into the store it reminded me of our very first store in Tucson."

Andy laughed, "That bad!"

Lindsay told him, "No, just the layout. Condition wise it is in very good shape...more than I could have said about The Grossi property."

Andy was wondering, "What the heck is this Grossi property you keep talking about?"

I told him, "From my understanding it was a sports bar. The owner shut it down and sold it to an investor who in turned gutted the entire place except the restrooms. The place was giant and would have taken a lot of work just to finish it. Also, it was not in the downtown, it was a little bit a ways outside on the highway coming in from Nashville."

Andy wondered, "Curious how far are we from everything?"

I told him, "So the barn is about 10-minutes from downtown and only a few minutes from where we are staying now. As I said, this retail only store front is only a couple minutes from Abby's."

Andy asked, "What do you mean by retail only?"

I explained, "So the downtown 'Main Street' is made up two north-south blocks. The first block or West Block which is where Abby's store is; On that block the west side is two or three levels with mixed retail and residential, as is Abby's. Across the street where Taylor's Bakery is located that side is single or dual level and retail only. The next block over, the East Block is the same type of layout except flipped. The west side is single or dual level retail only while the east side is two or three story mixed retail and residential. There's quite a bit over here; a general store, hardware store, a small grocery store, post office, drug store. There is burger place over here that can compete with the place we go to in Carefree."

Lindsay added, "Leslie tells me there is small pizzeria and taco shop at the other end of the block where Abby's shop is."

We arrived at the space and I was able to park in front. Andy was surprised, "Wow, on street parking right in front of the stores. Don't really see that much anymore." He also noticed lots of people walking around, "You weren't kidding about the foot traffic. Oh I see what you are talking about with the pedestrian pass-thru access."

Victor and Victoria arrived. Victoria asked, "So what do you think about this location?"

Andy added, "Really like the foot traffic. Never really had that at our other stores. They are in all shopping centers or in the case of Fountain Hills it is own little building. Think it used to be medical offices. Bought it off a friend of mine some twenty years ago. Least that one he went through the proper channels. More than I can say about Gerald, or more like his crooked accountant...the dude knew full well what he was doing was a violation and fraud. He got his in the end when the Arizona Department of Revenue met up with Gerald when he returned from Costa Rica. As part of his plea-deal Gerald had his attorney locate and deliver the

accountant to the agency."

I laughed, "Geez what is with us doing business with fraudsters? Not sure who was worse that guy or Jed."

Sara without hesitation replied, "Jed, by far. I am really surprised how long it took for his actions to catch up with him. Of course, he kept disappearing and sounded like he was getting ready to do so again if Peaches and Tess hadn't had the incriminating evidence and knew where he was hiding. I sort of felt bad for the way I treated him when she showed up at the house...but looking back yeah...he got what he deserved from me and Maya!"

Wynn commented, "I had no idea who he was when the guard house called. I remember Maya asking me if I had just said what I did. When I told her yes, she turned a whiter shade of pale. She mentioned he was y'all's father, but did not go into much detail. I hadn't realized he was at the wedding."

Sara reminded her, "Not very long. As soon as he walked me down the aisle he disappeared. I kept looking for him while we were at the reception, but really was not surprised he had vanished again. I think I was more shocked that he even showed up. I sent the invitation to a PO Box he had in Pennsylvania which was where he had ended up after our mother's death. Yeah, he's quite the conman."

We headed inside the retail space. Andy looked around, "Okay, I get what you are talking about Lindsay it does remind me of that very first store."

Wynn laughed, "Oh *that* store, the 'what the hell were you two thinking' store!"

Lindsay giggled, "Yep, that was the one! Hey, that was all we could afford at that point. We had a hard enough time trying to find someone give us a loan and when we did get a loan it was not as much as we had hoped."

Andy added, "Yeah, but by god we put a lot sweat equity into that place. We were bound and determined to make it successful. We ate a lot Ramen those first few months..."

Lindsay added, "And tons of left over cheap Chinese take-out food."

Andy laughed, "Oh man, I forgot about that. I think those ladies felt sorry for us and would give us extra helpings. It always seemed like we brought home more food than we had ordered. Man we had the time of our lives and we proved we could do it. That was my dream to have my own store, but then one thing led to another and we just kept growing and then we bought Fountain Hills."

Wynn added, "Again, what the hell were you thinking!?"

Andy shrugged, "I have no idea, it sounded good on paper."

Lindsay joked, "Much like Boot's Chugwater looked smaller on paper."

Andy tried to focus, "Okay, let's see here. Man, this place really does feel like our first store. The good news is everything is smaller now so space shouldn't be as tight."

I added, "True, not having to deal with CRT monitors anymore."

Lindsay added, "Or 'desktop' computers that took up your entire desktop."

Victoria laughed, "We still have one of those relics in our office. It runs a very old piece of software that no one has redone to run on a more modern operating system. We are nervous one day it is going to die on us and no one is going to be able to repair it."

I added, "No doubt, trying to find parts would be a challenge. Keep us in mind if you do run into troubles, we might be able to find a creative workaround."

Victor advised Andy, "Your wife and Ron have not mentioned anything about possible changes you need to do here."

Andy told Victor, "Honestly, I really don't see that we would need to do anything major. We'd just need to get a couple tech benches, some display stands/rack and a display case for the front."

Lindsay reminded Andy, "I can help you with that. Between Buck and his buddy on the other side of Nashville we can get what ever we need. Which being this is such a small space would not be much."

Andy sighed, "This is a lot to take in...I'm getting hungry."

Sara joked, "You're always hungry."

Wynn added, "Must be time to feed his tapeworm again."

Andy laughed the joking off, "Whatever!"

I suggested, "Why don't we take a walk over to that burger place I was telling you about earlier. Give you a chance to see the other businesses on the row. Victoria and Victor, thank you for your time. I will get back to you one way or another, just not sure yet when."

Victoria told us, "That is fine, there is a lot y'all need to discuss. If you any other questions, concerns, what have you; feel free to give me a call."

Victor told us, "Pleasure to meet y'all. Good luck in what ever you choose to do."

Once they left the five of us headed over to the burger place. Wynn commented upon walking in, "Looks like a country version of the one out in Carefree."

Chapter 21: Decision Time

After we ordered I asked, "Well, what is on everyone's mind?"

Andy asked, "I don't mean to come off wrong, but you are serious about this?"

I told him, "Very much so. I need...we need a reset. A chance to slow down. Hell look at Laura, I thought she was crazy at first when she told me about staying out here. Of course then I realized she was crazy for what she was doing at the resort. Besides it gives me an excuse to drop the on-site repair agreements with Linda and Gary. I am certain Marty can handle whatever they throw at him. In the rare instance he can't, I'll fly out take care of it and bill them a hefty surcharge."

Lindsay, "Ron's right you know. We need this too. PC's and Things was nice, but don't you miss our beginning days of McGrawl Innovation Systems?"

Andy admitted, "Yeah, I do. Things were so much simpler then. One store, just you and I. Dunn would help us occasionally. I do love how everything is so close here. I would really be nice to have a single store again."

Lindsay agreed, "Very much so! As great as Fountain Hills has been for revenue, that never made up for the aggravation it caused."

Andy clarified, "So you were saying around June next year?"

I told him, "Based on what Victor told me about the construction timelines, yes."

Andy told us, "Well, you have never steered us wrong and always looked out for us. So, if Ron has faith that this is going to workout for all us, I guess I am in. I know Lindsay sure is."

I asked Sara, "What about you?"

Sara sighed, "On one hand I still get to be with Lindsay, but then I won't be seeing my sister."

I reminded her, "You are more than welcome to invite them to come visit. I am sure Peaches would love to get away during the summer for a few days. We have three guest rooms. Heck I am sure Marc and Martina would love to come out as well."

Sara told me, "Well as you know Miss Bordeaux will no longer be an issue..."

Lindsay added, "Plus unlike Miss Bordeaux, at least Miss Womack likes Kacie."

Sara laughed, "Yeah, that's hard to believe. But, still not certain how Linda would handle this."

I reminded them, "I'll take care of Linda, she owes me...believe me she owes me."

Lindsay added, "Plus as I was telling Ron we have a couple interns working now that may be can come on full time."

Sara agreed, "Yeah, MJ is great, really knows his stuff. Oh what the hell, it is time for a change!"

I turned to Wynn, "How about you Wynn what are your thoughts?"

Wynn joked, "That is going to be a lot of house to clean! No, seriously...I've been with y'all for what the past 15 years? Fairy Duster house then Acme then back to Fairy Duster and now Sagebrush. Dang it Ron cain't you settle down!"

I blamed the McGrawl's, "Well if a certain couple hadn't decided they want to venture out on their own, only to come back a few months later, we'd likely still be at the Fairy Duster house...or even the Acme House...nah Acme was way too big."

Andy asked, "So what's the next step?"

I told him, "We tell Victoria we want to do this and she get the process going. Now, a couple more things and these are important so pay attention! First, Mother and Blanche are coming in tomorrow to surprise Laura for Thanksgiving. Think they are due in the morning. They don't know that I am considering having us relocate out here. So no one is to mention this to them. Even Laura knows not to say anything to them, of course again she doesn't know they are coming in. I'll likely tell them when they come out to Arizona for Christmas. By that time, we should know for sure when everything is going to happen. Also, in regards to furniture, 95% of what we have now we are not going to bring with us. It will be cheaper and easier just to get all new."

Andy asked, "So do we need to come back here at some point to select our furniture?"

I told him, "No. We can go the place I do business with out in Gilbert. They will deliver anywhere in the country and they do have warehouse store in Nashville. Those few items we are keeping will be shipped along with all our toys. This includes the bedroom set and chaise in the FROG, plus the two chaises in the studio. Also, the majority of your clothes too. You will need to bring with you enough to get you by for a few days until everything else is shipped. The first day we're likely going to be at Target for a good part of the day. We will need everything from cleaning supplies to housewares, plus flatware and dishes as well as everything in between."

Wynn asked, "Are you coming back with us on Sunday?"

I told her, "No, Lindsay and I had already planned on helping Laura during her first full week. Also, from what Victoria told me it should be a 10-day escrow on the house, so once it closes Victor and I need to go over somethings in regards to layout and design. The biggest is he needs to look at the plumbing situation for the play loft. Plus he is going to mark out the new expansion."

Lindsay added, "I will need to take care of the lease or purchase of our retail space....which are we doing by the way?"

Andy replied, "Victoria did provide me a price quote before she left. I am not sure if we could do a purchase right-away. The buyout would take about 60 to 90-days to complete. Of course once that is complete we are done with PC's and Things...unless Max or Doyle hire me on as an independent contractor. Not that Lindsay is over there much anymore, but you will loose your \$100 a week pay check!"

Lindsay being dramatic, "Oh no! How am I going to survive just on my pay and commissions from the Budget Holstein?! Money that is just piling up in the bank, because Sara always insists she pays whenever we go out. Of course, these past couple weeks I've been spending some of my money."

Sara told Lindsay, "Well next time we go out *you* pay!"

Andy was concerned, "So if we get the space now it would sit empty until June?"

Lindsay told him, "Or we wait and hope we can still get something in the same area when we get closer."

Andy understood, "No, no...I really like that place. It does remind me so much of what we started with. There is no way in hell I am going to let this slip away. So,

I have to pay taxes and utilities for a few months, the buy outs would cover that. Wow, cain't believe I am even saying this."

Lindsay told him, "It is meant to be!"

Wynn commented, "Haven't seen you two this excited and passionate in years...it is so nice!"

I called Victoria, "Ron Merlot here. Go ahead and submit an offer as you see fit for the barn and the McGrawl's want to move forward with the retail space in downtown."

Victoria was excited, "Great! Give me about an hour to draw up the paperwork. Did you want me to meet you at The Cheshire's?"

I told her, "Were still in downtown. Likely will head over to Abby's store then we can meet you at your office."

Victoria confirmed, "Yeah, that works. Like I said give me about an hour."

After I wrapped up with Victoria I told everyone, "Okay, she will be ready for us in about an hour. Let's head over to Abby's store."

We walked up the block then by The McGrawl's future store to get to the block Laura's store was located. We came in through the back. I called out, "Laura?"

Miranda called out, "She's upstairs Ron."

I told her, "Of course she is. Anyway, we have some time to kill before we can start signing documents."

Laura came down the stairs and heard the last part, "So y'all are going to do this?"

I told her, "Yes we are. The McGrawl's are going to have a store on the next block over right over by the pedestrian thruway."

Laura asked, "So does that mean Sara and or Lindsay will be working here?"

Sara replied, "I will be sure. Not certain about Lindsay."

Lindsay told Laura, "Likely part time. Andy and I are going back to our roots with a single computer store."

Andy commented, "So much so, that space reminds us of our first store in Tucson

some 25-years ago.”

Miranda asked, “Where are you guys going to be living?”

I replied, “About a mile northeast of The Cheshire’s. Just past where Salt Creek road curves and heads north.”

Miranda told us, “That is very nice and quiet area, but yet still close to the downtown. I am a couple more miles north of where y’all shall be. It is more rural area which is great for our goats, chickens and horses.”

We chatted some more until Victoria called me to tell us she was ready. We headed out the front door and saw Sophie’s truck parked in front of the store. I pointed it out, “This is the truck Sophie bought from Dave.”

Wynn commented, “That is beautiful. Nothing like a classic pickup. Sure as hell don’t make them like this anymore. They are all so dang huge now.”

We walked over to Victoria’s office and spent the rest of the afternoon on paperwork. I had Wynn go fetch the Murano since she didn’t need to be with us. We returned back to the farm a bit later than planned. I had called Charlotte earlier to let her know we’d be late for dinner. When we walked in Dave greeted us, “Welcome soon to be neighbors! Charlotte will get your dinner warmed up.”

After dinner Laura called me, “Hey Ron, could you come by the store tomorrow morning. The WiFi is acting funky and not sure why.”

I told her, “Yeah I can stop by.” After I was done with her I told Wynn, “Mother and Blanche are due in tomorrow morning. Perhaps you can go with Leslie to the airport to get them. Again, they don’t know anything about our intentions of coming out here. I want wait until everything is confirmed before I tell them.”

Chapter 22: Surprise and The Next Steps

The next morning Leslie took Wynn up the Nashville airport to pickup our Mother and Blanche. Wynn finally saw mother and Blanche, “Lorena! Blanche! Over here!”

Lorena came over and laughed, “Wynn! Why I am not surprised you are here instead of Ron?”

Wynn told her, “Yeah. Laura has Ron trying to fix her store’s WiFi. Did you two have checked bags?”

Blanche advised her, “Yeah, so we need to head over to baggage claim.”

Wynn commented, "Suppose we follow the signs. I'll let Leslie know we are waiting on your bags."

By the time they got their bags Leslie was coming around. Wynn placed the bags in the bed of truck and got in the front with Leslie. Leslie told them, "We'll stop at the farm house first so you can drop off your bags and freshen up. I talked to Ron and he suggested we all meet at The Taco Shop on the eastern block." An hour later mother and Blanche arrived at The Cheshire's farm. "Welcome to The Cheshire Farms. The guest house or barn is in the rear."

Wynn told Leslie, "I need to head over to Laura's store. Miranda is having issues with her iPad so I am going to bring a new one."

Leslie told her, "Okay, we'll see you in about half hour or so." Leslie took Lorena and Blanche's bag from the bed of truck and headed to the barn, "Follow me ladies!" They entered the first floor and Leslie explained, "Living room, small kitchen with a nook and bathroom on this level. Upstairs we have four bedrooms and a couple bathrooms." She lead them upstairs and told them, "We have small sitting area here. They typically have the fireplace going in the evening as it does get cold out here. There is one bathroom at the other end of the hall where Ron and Sara and my sister and her husband are. There is another bathroom over here and you are across the hall from Wynn. Here we are, hope it suits you two well."

Blanche was in love with the architecture, "Wow, this place reminds me of growing up. I had friends who had an old farm house and barn. Not as nice as this, but then again it was during a time period when it was more about function than design."

Lorena looked around, "A little smaller than we are used to, but we don't need anything large."

Leslie told them, "You do have an electric fireplace in here. It is on a wall timer, so all you need to do is turn the knob clockwise past '15'. It will shut off automatically. There are extra blankets and another quilt in the chest at the foot of the bed. Since no one else is here right now other than Sara, one of you can use the other bathroom if you both want to freshen up before we head out in about 20-minutes."

Meanwhile at Laura's store Wynn came in, "Ron! Abby! I come bearing a gift...an iPad!"

Laura told her, "Don't think we are going to need it now, Ron was finally able to get it connect to the store's WiFi."

Wynn advised, "Well, keep it as a spare in case one does give you troubles later. Anyway Leslie wants us to meet her at the Taco Shop for lunch."

Since Miranda and Kacie knew what was going on Kacie told her, "Go ahead. Miranda and I will go over to Taylor's a little later."

Andy and Lindsay had been over at Victoria's office taking care of more paperwork and financial for their new store. They walked over to the Pizzeria and arrived before anyone else. Laura, Wynn and I took the Murano over to the Taco Shop. I walked in first looking around for The McGrawl's and everyone else. The hostess came over and told me, "Ron everyone is in the back. Follow me."

We made our way to the rear and Laura was surprised to see mother and Blanche, "Mother! What are you doing out here?"

Lorena told her, "Wanted to spend Thanksgiving with y'all. We were going to come up to Scottsdale, but then Ron said y'all were out here. So we decided we'd cash in some of our premium airline miles that we've been saving for ages and come out here and surprise you."

Laura was in tears, "Certainly is a nice surprise."

Lorena noticed Sophie was missing, "Where's Sophie?"

Leslie told her, "She's working at my daughter's cafe. You'll see her tomorrow."

Blanche asked, "So how you liking it out here?"

Laura told them, "It is nice. Should've done this a long time ago. So glad I decided to come out here to help Ron with The Cheshire's project. Mainly, I just needed to get away from that resort. Also needed a break from Miss Kitty. She's is doing well and adjusting to being manager at the Oro Valley store. She's adjusting better than Linda is to retirement!"

I laughed, "I don't doubt that. She's keeps texting me asking about expanding the Gold Canyon store even though Kacie told her that can not be done."

Laura added, "The good news is Linda is going to be doing a holiday festival out in Douglas for a weekend, so that should keep her occupied. Now all we need to do is find more festivals for her to attend!"

After lunch The McGrawl's announced they were going to take a walk around the area and likely get a ride back with Leslie. Sara told us she would join them. The remainder of us headed over to Laura's store. Blanche was really liking the area,

"This is nice. It is so great to see a vibrant and bustling downtown. When are you opening?"

Laura told them, "Officially, on Monday but we will open for a bit on Friday and Saturday. Miranda has been talking to the other store owners on 'Main Streets' and been leaving a flier or card. Some have asked us to do the same for them, so will have those at the front counter."

Lorena asked, "Who's Miranda?"

Laura told her, "She's my operations manager. Her and Kacie went out somewhere for lunch. Sophie is not going to be involved with my store, hence the reason she is working at The Cheshire's Cafe."

I commented, "We will have a chance to eat there on Friday or Saturday."

Thanksgiving morning we all went over to the main house for breakfast. Introduced them to mother and Blanche, "Charlotte and Dave, this is our mother Lorena and her partner Blanche."

Charlotte came over and hugged them, "Nice of you to come join us. These are our kids Timmy and Dolly. So the kids along with Lindsay, Sara and Sophie are all going to be at a different table in the extra room."

Dave added, "Though with everyone else here we are still going to have to eat in shifts."

Friday morning we headed over to The Cheshire's Cafe and were greeted by Sophie. This was the first time I had seen her in uniform, a berry colored long sleeve t-shirt, and black skirt with black opaque tights. She told us, "Welcome, find an open table to your liking and I will be with you shortly."

After breakfast Leslie took them out on a tour of Nashville. Meanwhile Wynn, Lindsay and I headed over to Laura's store. We came in the back and I called out, "Laura!?"

Miranda called out, "She's hiding upstairs!"

Laura was coming down the stairs, "I was not 'hiding' simply using the restroom."

Miranda joked, "Sure...you do know you have a perfectly good one down here."

Laura replied back, "Well, I prefer my own restroom...that I share with Sophie."

I asked, "Kacie around?"

Miranda told me, "She said she'd be here around ten. We are not going to open until about eleven."

I asked, "Everything seem to be working okay?"

Laura replied, "So far. Miranda's iPad is behaving itself."

Kacie came in a bit after ten and they opted to go ahead and open then. Both Wynn and Lindsay were modeling the western product lines. Lindsay was in a long denim dress with a cowgirl hat. Wynn was wearing a corset, Mullet skirt with her tan fishnets and a top hat. Over the course of the morning a few people trickled in. Most were curious to see what this new shop had to offer. When lunch time rolled around the foot traffic picked up a lot more people started coming in. Taylor came in later in the afternoon, "Wow, this place is nice!" She saw the cash wrap, "Oh that is a gorgeous counter. I know that was not in here before." Leslie explained the story behind the counter and what she did. Taylor asked, "Mind if I look around?"

Leslie told her, "Go right ahead. If you need anything let myself or my sister know." Taylor did end up buying a couple dresses and some accessories.

By late afternoon things had slowed down and we decided to call it a day. Saturday was much busier, as people who had passed by on Friday came back for a closer look. Sunday was a day of rest from the businesses for all of us. Leslie took us out for the day. Mother and Blanche left Monday morning and they would meet us up at the Sagebrush house for Christmas. That morning Wynn asked, "When are we going back?"

I reminded her, "Lindsay and I are here for the entire week to help out Laura. I might end up staying here longer depending on when we close on the Salt Creek house. If we close at the end of this week then likely next Monday Victor can start doing some probing and give me a visual of the new layout. I know Sara really needs to get back being Kacie and Lindsay are out here. I am not sure about Andy, if he is going to need to stay out here or if Lindsay will be able to take care of the arrangements for their new store."

Wynn told me, "I talked to Andy last night and he does plan on coming back this week. I'll check with Sara, but I guess we might be heading back later today."

I told her, "That's fine. I'll let you know when I expect to be back. I believe Lindsay is going to fly back with Kacie."

Wynn, Sara and Andy departed later that day. Things were going well with the Boutique Holstein with more people coming in each day. Thursday evening

Victoria called me, "Ron, we should be able to close on the property tomorrow. Can you meet me at my office in the morning?"

I replied, "Should be able to get away from Abby's store for a bit." Friday morning after Laura opened and everything still seemed to be under control I headed over to Victoria's office. I was nearly done with the closing paperwork when Laura called my phone, "What broke?"

Laura laughed, "Nothing broke, but I thought I should warn you Linda is here."

I was surprised, "Really, how did she find you...oh wait Kacie probably told her. Okay, well I am nearly done here. Don't say anything to her about my situation."

Laura replied, "I know not to, just like with mother as does everyone else here."

I wrapped up with Laura and told Victoria, "So Linda Holstein managed to find her way out here to Abby's store." Once we were done she handed me a couple sets of keys. I handed her back a set telling her, "These will be for Victor. Any idea when he can get out there to do the preliminary inspection."

Victoria told me, "He should be able to on Tuesday, Monday is he wrapping up on another project."

I told her, "Okay, that should work. Then I should be able to head back to Arizona on Wednesday then. Well, I better head back to Abby's store before Linda starts asking her questions that she does not want to answer." I made my way over to Abby's store and walked in to find Linda wearing a denim skirt, black stockings, t-shirt and boots with a cowgirl hat. I approached, "Linda when did you get into town and where's your horse?"

Linda laughed, "Very funny Ron. You know I make it a point to visit all my stores..."

I commented, "Even if they are half way across the country?"

Linda added, "Well, normally no..but then I have never had a store outside of Arizona. But, I wanted to see how things are going and I am really impressed. Neat area out here, but my home is in Arizona: always has been, always will be."

I understood, "Yeah, I can understand that....wait weren't you and Hal from NorCal?"

Linda explained, "No, I was born and raised in Arizona. Hal was born outside of Oakland and stayed there until we got married and settled down and built The

Ranch. We'd been there almost 15-years until his and Maria's sudden death. Anyway, I am not going to be here very long. Kacie, Lindsay and I are going to head back to Arizona later today."

Sunday Laura and I went out with Leslie into Nashville for the day. Sunday evening Victor called me, "Say Ron, I have a delay with my current project, so if you are free tomorrow I can start looking over your place."

I told him, "That works for me. That way I can fly back tomorrow afternoon." We agreed to meet around nine the next morning. That Monday I arrived to find Victor was already on the property, "I thought you meant nine Tennessee time not Arizona."

Victor laughed, "I wanted to get thing marked out before you arrived. So lets go up front. We will extend the driveway into the property further to meet up with the new garage building and fork off the side entry. Oh, we are going to do the four tandem bay, it really isn't much more than three bay. Not, now but later on you will need to tell me how you want to do the interior. We likely won't get that built unit the spring when the ground thaws. I am pushing to get the excavation done as soon as possible for the new parts so we can lay concert before it becomes too cold. We should be okay as typically does not get really cold until late December into January."

I asked, "How cold?"

Victor replied, "You can have some nights that it will below 0 starting in November. It has been pretty warm lately, but typically it is below freezing by this time. The worst will be January and February...may be even into March."

I told him, "Much like Arizona, July and August are the worst, September ain't great, but it ain't as bad. October through April is beautiful. Even early May ain't bad, but by Memorial Day it is already over 100. But, it also depends on how active the monsoon is that summer. Get an active monsoon and it can be a lot cooler, but you are dealing with the humidity though."

Victor showed me where the Portico would we on the side, "We were originally going to have this only come out the length of the sitting room, but I am thinking we might actually put it all the way out the edge of the tack room. My idea is for the portion from the entrance at the mudroom to the edge of the sitting room would be at the same level as the barn. Then we will do some steps out and may be brick pavers or a stamped concrete to the driveway. Let's more over to the back of the house."

I noticed an outline with an outline, "What's the two sets of marking here?"

Victor told me, "The broken line is the new kitchen wall will come out to. The solid line is where the porch will come out to."

It all made sense now, "Okay, that explains a lot."

Victor told me, "Let's head up the third floor it is time for me to go 'plumbing hunting!'" We went to finished third floor and Victor commented, "Oh, I suppose I should mark off where the new stair alignment will be. Luckily I have a roll of blue tape with me." Victor looked at the plans and measured from the wall and stairs then started laying down the tape. Victor took out a hammer, "So, in theory according to these plans the middle guest suite is below us. Let me get this carpeting of the way and then I can peel up the sub floor. I suspect there is a vent stack in this wall next to the stairs as otherwise it serves no other purpose." With a bit of 'exploratory surgery' Victor confirmed, "Okay, so there are water lines below us. We should be able to tap into those to run new lines up here. So I should be able to use the existing vent stack in here, just will need to make some adjustments by extending both the drainage and vent stacks for new fixtures up here."

I asked, "When will you be able a cost break down."

Victor told me, "Most likely in a couple weeks. Need to get my sub contractors out here to give me more finite estimates. You have the base estimate already and most of those were on the high end. I will adjust that estimate some more with the new changes we made such as the cover porch and the Portico. Plus what I think the plumbing will run for up here based on my findings today. When are you going to come back to choose fixtures, finishes, appliances, etc.?"

I told him, "No clue. When should I?"

Victor told me, "Let's say mid-February. By that time we should be moving along on the new framing. I don't expect us to do demo until after the first year. As I said earlier I am hoping before winter to get all the concrete work done for the house itself. The garage building we can wait as that is modular and will only take a couples days to assemble. Inside work another couple days to a week? Were you wanting any plumbing in there?"

I told him, "Don't think so. Just going to be used for storage."

Victor advised me, "Okay, well if anything comes up, I will let you know. I will send you photos as we progress. If you have any questions, concerns or issues let Victoria or I know. Oh...um....do you know the timeline for The McGrawl's store are they still here?"

I told him, "No I do not. Andy drove back with Sara and Wynn beginning of last

week. Lindsay left last Friday with Kacie and Miss Holstein. I'll have them get in contact with you. I don't believe they want to open any sooner than we all move out here."

Victor agreed, "That makes sense. Besides which there is not a lot we need to do with their retail space."

Once I finished with Victor I called Marc to find out what the next flight back to Arizona he could get me on. He informed me the next available would be in the mid-afternoon, putting me in Arizona by about the same time. I had him book the flight to Deer Valley and then called Wynn. In a few hours I was back in Arizona. Wynn met me at the airport, "Everything go okay?"

I told her, "Yeah...there is a lot to be done and a lot that needs to happen before the first big winter freeze. Victor seems to think they can a lot knocked out in the next couple weeks. I am supposed to return likely mid-February to check the process and make design selections. How have things been over here?"

Wynn replied, "Quiet. No Laura, No Sophie. Andy, Sara and Lindsay all at work. Least you'll be here now."

I laughed, "Yeah and I have a lot of work to get caught up on. I had not planned on being out in Tennessee for so long." I looked around the house and it was rather empty, "Damn, here we are early December and no Christmas decorations. Hmm....well I have things I need to get done today...perhaps tomorrow I can start getting the house decorated. Will need to take a trip up to Carefree to get the tree. Have no idea where the Christmas decorations or my tree jig are...I am guessing in the far garage. Of course, get to do this all again next year, but at least then should be able to find permanent places for everything."

Wynn laughed, "Yeah we've been moving a lot these past few years. Well, I am going to head to market to get food for dinner. Got a new chicken dish I'd like to try."

I replied, "That sounds good. I'll be in my office."

That evening everyone returned and Wynn made a Romano Crusted Chicken. I informed everyone, "Tomorrow I will head up to Carefree and get us a tree. It is a tad barren in here."

Lindsay offered, "Sara and I can help get the house decorated once we get back tomorrow."

I told her, "Thanks that would be nice. Now if you excuse me I have some work I

need to get done." Unfortunately, my body was still on Tennessee time and was falling asleep around nine. I decided there was not use trying to fight it and wrapped up for the night. I passed Wynn in the kitchen and told her, "Heading to bed. My body thinks it is after eleven!" I ended up sleeping through the entire night. Not sure if Sara had came in or not during the night, she may have spent the night with Lindsay. I headed into the kitchen to grab a bowl of cereal and an English Muffin. I asked Wynn, "Did Sara stay with Lindsay or was I so tired that I managed not be awoken by her?"

Wynn told me, "After you had gone to bed, I went up the play loft to check on them before I retired. I told Sara you had already gone to bed and she told me her and Lindsay spend the night together."

Chapter 23: Christmas at Sagebrush and Some Minor Adjustments

After finishing my breakfast I headed back to my office to get more work done. Later that morning Wynn came in and asked, "Did you still plan on going up to Carefree today?"

I looked at the time and saw it was nearly noon, "Yeah, this would be as good of a time as any. Want to join me for lunch and help me get a tree?"

Wynn told me, "I can...give me a few minutes to change."

I laughed, "Yeah and I suppose I should too. Them there trees tend to be sticky."

After we changed we headed over to the Chuck Wagon burger shop and oddly enough found it not to be as good as the place in Tennessee. After lunch we went over to the tree farm and the owner saw me, "Ron, thought I somehow missed you this year."

I told, "Nope, been busy. We're going to be relocating next summer out to Tennessee. My sister already got a job out there and The McGrawl's have family out there."

He replied, "Dang you been coming here for almost last 20-years. Well, it has been a pleasure serving you. Anyway, you're here for a tree, so what size you looking for this year?"

We found a tree that would work for the space and got it loaded on top of The Jeep. Once we got back to the house I started digging though the far garage. Found my Merry Mo's signs and after more hunting found my tree jig. I commented to Wynn, "Suppose I will have this shipped out along with the cows. Everything else can be donated."

Wynn reminded me, "The girls purchased those Country decorations just last year, might want to bring those along as well."

I had forgotten about those, "Oh yeah, that was back when he had Kayré and Kacie with us...there should be room in the container for those and I guess all the lights too. Okay, let me get this setup and if you can get a pot of boiling water going. Where are we going to put this tree?"

Wynn and I walked back into the house and looked around. Wynn pointed out, "Well, we could put on the wall next to the utility room. Or if we move some stuff around in the great room we could put it there."

I looked around and sighed, "Yeah, putting it by the utility room would be easy, but just won't look right. Okay, let's move some furniture around in the great room and see what we can do." Wynn and I moved some chairs to another part of the great room. She went into the kitchen to get the boiling water going while I headed out to trim the tree. Once Wynn had the water ready she poured it into the stand then I placed the tree into the stand. I stood back and looked at the tree, "Not bad. It will look a lot better once Sara and Lindsay do their thing."

Wynn asked, "I realize we are still about three weeks out from Christmas, but when are your mother and Blanche coming up? Plus, who else might join us?"

I told her, "Mother and Blanche haven't said anything to me yet. I think Maya and Ana may join us. Claudette is still with the Zinfandel's. Marc and Martina usually go somewhere. Not sure about Kayré and Kacie...oh wait Linda mentioned something about them going to be with her and Olivia down at The Ranch. I give mother and Blanche a call next week when things quiet down here." That evening Sara and Lindsay decorated the tree. Since we had a ton of outdoor lights leftover from last year I was able to string them along the side porch. I added the Polar Bear by the front door and found a place by the driveway to setup the 'cow corral'. The following night Sara and Lindsay dug out the rest of the decorations, most of which they bought last year. I told them, "I'll get some sturdier bins we can put these decorations into so they can be shipped out with the 'toys' and few other items."

Sara asked, "There will be a place for me park my Road Runner?"

I told her, "Yes, we are going to have a large garage building which can hold up to eight cars. However, I think one of the bays is going to be used for my shop and storage. We will need to make arrangements to get your Road Runner shipped out there along with The McGraw's cars."

Lindsay commented, "About that. I think I am going to sell the Mini before we move. We really don't need two cars if we all are going to be working by each

other.”

Sara added, “True and I can always take my Road Runner.”

I reminded her, “Not during the winter months you will.”

Lindsay didn’t understand, “Why, not in the winter. She used it here in the winter.”

I explained, “Yeah, but we don’t get that much ice and snow that the roads need to be salted. The road salt over time will eat away any metal it comes in contact with. The Jeep is so old now that it really doesn’t much matter and besides we will want to use The Jeep during the winter months. The Murano I will be sure to get it waxed regularly and wash off the salt as soon as possible. You will need to do the same with the Lexus. It might not be so bad as it is only a couple months out of the year.” By the weekend I had finally gotten back into the groove of things and gave my mother a call on Saturday after Martina’s yoga session, “So, Wynn is asking when you two are coming up and how long you plan on staying.”

Lorena told me, “We’ll likely come up that Monday and leave couple days later. Any idea when Laura is coming out?”

I replied, “Haven’t talked to her since I got back, been trying to get caught up. The girls do their meeting here on Sundays, I’ll ask here tomorrow.” Sunday morning I told Sara and Lindsay, when y’all are done I want to talk to Laura to find out when she is coming out.” Lindsay told me she or Sara would come get me when they wrapped up.

An hour later Sara came in with her iPad. Laura saw me, “Hey Ron, finally getting into the 21st century! So Sara said you need to talk to me?”

I laughed, “Yeah, Mother and Blanche are coming up the Monday of Christmas week. Wondering when you plan on coming out?”

Laura told me, “Well, I was hoping to bring Sophie and likely around the same time. I’ll need to get Marc to hook us up with flights. I’ll give him a call a little later. When are you coming back out here?”

I told her, “I believe sometime in mid or late February. Victor is supposed to give me about a weeks notice so I can make preparations.”

Laura told me, “Well it will be good to see you again. I am really liking it out here. Love running this store and having defined hours and staff I can delegate to. I had staff at the resort, but never enough and my manager had no clue as to what she was doing. Anyway, I let you know once I know more.”

As I was looking for something on my desk I came across the renderings Victor had done up. I got to thinking with the way the barn was oriented having the entire backside of the kitchen with a covered porch would make the kitchen rather dark. Plus, I didn't really like having to go through the mud room just to get to the stairs and for Wynn to get to her room. I called Victor and he answered his cell fairly quick, "Ron Merlot! How's it going?"

I told him, "Doing well. Back to the rat race in Arizona. Anyway, I've been looking at the drawings and is it too late to make changes?"

Victor wondered, "What kind of changes? Nothing is committed yet though I do plan on submitting plans for approval next week so this is the time."

I explained, "I don't think we should do the covered porch along the back wall of the kitchen, I am worried it is going to make the kitchen dark. However, if space and the town allows I would like to have a covered porch on the front."

Victor told me, "It can be done, but we can't do it right-away. Since this is the street side we do need to get approval. However, since we are adding an architectural enhancement versus say more livable square footage it will be approved and fairly quickly too. I'll need to take a look and see how we can tie it in to the existing structure. Not sure if we want to do a slab or build a 'covered deck'."

I told him, "I'd rather do it the 'right way' not to 'cheap way'. That is the wooden 'covered deck'. Yes, I know it is going to cost more, but it would look like it was there all the time."

Victor advised me, "We can do that, it is going to be a lot more. However, as you have said it would look like it was original. Which also likely will get us expedited approval. Any other changes you want?"

I advised him, "Yes. I also think we need to rework the southern side as well. Could we flip the stairs so they come into the kitchen."

Victor told me, "Let me get the plans up and take a look. So on the second level where the stairs come up now is between the two standalone bedrooms. So if we flip them...hmm...that's a linen closet. That could work, but that area would need to wider. I believe....let me look at the more detailed plans...ah yes so the closet for that suite butts up against the linen closet. Then there is still about thee feet before the entrance to that suite. Closet of said bedroom butts up against the other end. So, we can either take six-inches from each closet to accommodate the stairs or a foot from either closet."

I asked, "Isn't there a linen closet in that hall bathroom?"

Victor looked, "Yeah. Oh, so may be we just delete the hall linen closet and then move the wall closet in that bedroom to where the stairs used to come up. You would actually gain some space in that room if you did that."

I replied, "Okay so that would be the girls' `activities room` as The McGrawl's don't need much space for an office. All that we plan on putting in there is a small writing desk and chair along with a chaise lounge. Basically somewhere quiet in case one of them needs to make a phone call or a video call."

Victor agreed, "Yeah, then the other now smaller room would work fine for that. Now on the downstairs, um....okay so the pantry won't be as deep, though it could still be. The shelving won't go in as deep but we can leave the space under the stairs open for bulk storage. So, then we would have a hallway from the kitchen to Wynn's area..."

I suggested, "How about we have a door there going out to a covered patio and may be shift Wynn's suite further east so there is more separation between the portico and her suite?"

Victor seemed to understand what I was suggesting, "So, the covered patio would be enclosed on the south side. Okay, yes that could work. Except, it would be very shallow...ah but we could extend Wynn's area to the east to edge of the patio. That would work as could put the bathroom over there instead on the south side. Okay, so then the mudroom and washroom would be accessible from the kitchen and the side entrance. That would allow us to have that entire south wall in the mudroom as built-in bench, rack and shelving. We can do that, I'll need to give you an updated cost on this."

I thought back to what the McGrawl's had told me, "You know, we may be able to offset some of that cost by only doing a three tandem bay building. So, The McGrawl's have decided they are going to just have one car now. We have three so that would allow us to have one bay for my shop and place for Wynn to park her Vespa, if she even brings it. Though I am concerned about storage so may be the four-bay would work."

Victor told me, "You could go RV height and we create a second level. If we did 14-feet we would need around 8-feet clearance for the doors so with flooring you would only have five to five and half feet clearance on the upper level. We could go 16 feet tall which would give you seven to seven and half feet of space. However, since this is a tandem we have the advantage of the extra width. So we could mount the door openers about 15-feet up so the door opens completely vertical then we build a deck at the seven foot mark which would give you seven feet clearance on top and about six and half on the bottom. That would

give you about 3-inches clearance for your Jeep.”

I was surprised, “Had not realized the Jeep was so tall, but yeah the wheels are large.”

Victor told me, “If you only need three bays we can do a ‘half bay’ to accommodate the stairs which would be nearly straight shot up. So you would have a little storage space under the stairs for bicycles or in your case Wynn’s Vespa. I’ll send you a link to the site so you can take a look at the different designs. Just keep in mind that if you ever do add cars, you might appreciate having the extra space, especially since the cost difference is rather small given your overall budget. You have time as we are not going to do that part until mid-April. Okay...let me re-draw rendering of the first and second floor as well as the overall foot print. Yeah, now that I think about it you will get a lot more light into the kitchen plus you will have more of an unobstructed view too. You still want an uncovered area for grilling and may be sitting area with a fire pit?” I sent him a picture of what we had here, “Okay...you know what I have an idea for that area. I’ll give you a good deal, I’ve been sitting on close to three square yards of flagstone for almost a year now. It was ordered for another job, but they decided to go with a different product. Since it was special order I could not cancel it and they ended up paying me for it and the new product. Yeah, that would work. That is Victoria’s area of expertise, but I am certain she can make it work. Okay, so let me make a note to have gas line ran to that area.”

A couple days later Victor sent me the new drawings and that evening I held a brief house meeting. I explained, “Over the weekend, Victor and I made some changes to the design. We have decided to delete the covered porch running along the kitchen. My concern was it would make the kitchen area dark, plus it would block the view out the back. In doing so, we also reconfigured the south end of the kitchen. The stairs will be flipped which changes a couple things upstairs. It will remove the linen closet between the two rooms and the closet of the adjoining room will be moved to the other wall where the stairs were prior. That room will be Sara and Lindsay’s play room. The bathroom in that hall already has a sufficient linen closet. So now, the stairs come into the kitchen instead of the mudroom.”

Wynn commented, “That makes more sense. So I see now there will be hall next to the stairs to my suite.”

I confirmed, “Yes as well as to the door out to the outdoor living area. There is going to be a partially enclosed patio there and then beyond that I am not certain. Victor says Victoria can do something creative with that area for a sitting area. He would not go into much detail, other than to say that area will be covered with flagstone which he has been trying to use for the past year. Wynn’s suite will be a little bigger too with the bathroom being next to the partially

enclosed patio.”

Laura called me the following weekend and told me her and Sophie would be flying out the Monday of Christmas week and would leave that weekend. She was going to take a leap of faith leaving Miranda and Leslie to run the store while she is gone. She would have Marc get in contact with me with the flight details. A couple days later Marc sent me an email with their flight information to and from Deer Valley. Given Wynn was going to be very busy that week getting the house ready for them as well as Mother and Blanche, I'd likely be the one picking them up. The weekend before Christmas mother called, "We are leaving Monday some time in the morning. Thinking we will be up there early afternoon. Any word yet from Laura?"

I told her, "Yes, she made arrangements with Marc for charter flight for her and Sophie. Looks like late Monday morning is when they are due in, at Deer Valley."

Lorena was excited, "This will be nice, first Christmas at your new place."

I thought to myself, "...and last." I told her, "Well, I've got a lot of work to get knocked out these next couple days so I'll see you all Monday." Truth be told I had wrapped up with most everything and was hunting for small triage jobs. However, I did not want to have to mention anything to mother about Tennessee until they arrived. I knew I would have to tell Gary, Linda as well as Marc and Martina, plus Maya and Peaches at some point. But, I wanted to wait until after I told mother and Blanche.

Monday morning after waking up I found Sara getting ready and asked her, "Can you and Lindsay take her Mini to the Budget Holstein this morning? Wynn needs The Jeep to go the market and I need to go get Mother and Blanche."

Sara told me, "Her Mini is in the shop, again. We'll take the Road Runner, I haven't driven it in a while."

I headed down to the kitchen and found Wynn getting breakfast prepped I advised her, "Sara and Lindsay will head to work in the Road Runner, so you have The Jeep. I'll take the Murano when I go get Laura and Sophie."

Wynn asked, "Who's staying where?"

I told her, "Laura and Sophie can use the Burgundy suite while Mother and Blanche will be in the southern suite."

Wynn reminded me, "Well, Sophie stays with me."

I stood corrected, "Okay, Laura will be in the Burgundy suite."

Wynn laughed then asked, "When are Lorena and Blanche coming in?"

I told her, "Your guess is as good as mine. Hopefully, they will call before they leave. Nonetheless, I'd recommend you go to the market as soon as we are done with breakfast. I need to leave around ten to get Laura and Sophie."

After breakfast Wynn went to the market while I checked the job boards. I found I had won a couple jobs and was getting more details when the house line rang. I answered and Blanche told me, "We are out in Florence should be about another couple hours."

I told her, "That's fine Wynn will be here. I'll be out picking up Abby and Sophie, so I'll see y'all when I bring them here."

Wynn came back about an hour later and I helped her unload. I told her, "Blanche called about an hour ago, they should be up in the next hour. As soon as I done here I am going to head over to Deer Valley Airport."

I left for the airport and arrived a few minutes after their charter flight was due to arrive. My cell rang and it was Sophie, "Ron, we've made it in and have no idea where we should be going."

I told her, "I'll be in there shortly, stay where you are and I'll find you two." I parked and made my way to the terminal. I found them and called out, "Abby and Sophie over here."

As we walked out I joked to Laura, "How was the flight?"

Her reply surprised me, "Not bad. Guess I am getting used to flying now."

I turned to Sophie and asked, "How much has she had to drink?"

Sophie told me, "None."

I laughed, "Well, that's peculiar!"

On the way back to the house Laura asked, "How's the inside of your place coming along?"

I told her, "Not much happening right now, had Victor made some changes to the bottom and middle floors. I believe they started excavating for the additions and will lay concrete after Christmas."

Laura asked, "Okay. I'll try to stop by there on Sundays and get pictures for you."

So, when are going to tell mother?"

I laughed, "Have no idea. Still need to tell Linda, Gary, Marc and Martina as well as Maya and Ana...well I think Sara will tell them. All I do know is mother and Blanche will likely already be at the house when we get back. They are going to stay downstairs, you can have the FROG to yourself. Wynn has already laid claim to Sophie."

We arrived back at the house and saw Blanche's truck parked near the far garage. Mother saw us, "Ron, Abby and Sophie, so nice to see you again."

During dinner mother commented, "This is nice place. Lot smaller than the last couple you had."

I replied, "Yeah, the plan was for it just to be for Sara, Wynn and I...however Lindsay just couldn't bear to be away from Sara for long period of time...even if they do see each other at work daily."

Lindsay and Sara nearly at the same time, "As if!"

I ignored their unison comment and continue, "A lot smaller than the place we had further north in the Ashler Hills Estate, the old Acme House."

Marc called me Christmas Eve and asked, "Hey any chance we could spend Christmas and have diner with y'all? Our flight to Vail has been canceled due to snow."

I told him, "Well, if that ain't a definition of irony...that is fine, just let it be known I will not be held responsible for whatever may happen with Martina and my sister."

Marc laughed, "Shall we have the Jerry Springer camera crew on standby?"

I replied, "Nah, I think they'll get along. Going to have eat in shifts as Maya and Ana will be here as well. I'd better let Wynn know. We should have plenty of food, even with Andy and his tapeworm."

Marc caught on about Peaches, "Oh she is going to be there, I'd better warn Martina to wear her chastity bra when we come over."

I wrapped up with Marc and headed to the kitchen to find Wynn. She saw me and commented, "I am about to head to the market, might not be back for a while."

I advised her, "Well, before you go I should tell you Marc and Martina will be joining us."

Wynn was surprised, "Thought they were going to Vail as they normally do."

I told her, "Yeah well, seems their flight was canceled due to heavy snow."

Wynn told me, "Well, the more the merrier, though it is going to be tight. Oh well, one more Christmas..."

Chapter 24: Time to Let The Cat Out of The Bag

Christmas morning our family exchanged gifts. After we were done most everyone headed up to the play loft. Mother and Blanche helped Wynn in the kitchen. I headed to my office and checked my email and job boards. I noticed an email with attachments from Victor. I opened the email and saw photos of the freshly laid concrete. The pictures were taken the day prior. He advised me the weather was going to work out as such the concrete would be able to cure. He advised framing wouldn't start until after the first of the year, but they would be working on gutting the downstairs, reconfiguring the stairs between the first and second levels and the stairs to the third level. The door bells chimed and I headed out to The Great Room to answer the door. It was Marc and Martina, who was in a Pink Mrs Clause dress. I commented, "Ah Martina, festive and yet still in your trademark pink."

She walked in and saw mother, "Hello Lorena and Blanche. I see Wynn is keeping you two busy!"

Mother laughed, "Yes Martina she is. How are things with you and Marc?" They chatted for a few minutes while Marc and I headed to the studio. Martina ended up joining the girls upstairs. I went back to working on my current job and Maya called that afternoon, "We are on our way, see you shortly."

I headed out to The Great Room and saw Marc was engrossed in one of my vintage Playboy's he saw me and commented, "I always thought it was a joke about the 'articles' but they are well written. Very different times back in the 80's"

I laughed, "Yeah, amazing what they got away with then that would be taboo now. Anyway, Maya and Ana should be here shortly and we'll likely start the first round of dinner."

Marc told me, "I think Martina is still occupied with your sister or Lindsay and I had some food earlier, so I think we'll pass on this round."

I headed towards the kitchen and told Wynn, "Maya and Peaches should be here shortly..." Just as I said that the door bells chimed, "...or now."

I opened the door to see Maya in a red dress with nude stockings. Peaches was wearing a white sweater dress with white boots paired with sheer black stockings and a Santa hat. I commented, "Nice to see you two! Maya our 'Lady in Red' and Peaches you look great love the contrast and the Santa hat. Come on in and mingle. Most everyone is up in the loft. I think Sara and Sophie are in The Great Room. Marc is in the studio."

Laura I ended up having dinner during the second round with our mother and Blanche. During dinner mother commented, "So nice, to have the family together here. When we going to get do this again?"

I told her, "Well, Sara and I along with the McGrawl's would likely be down at The Holstein Ranch for Thanksgiving. Oh and I suppose Wynn would be there as well. Andy and Lindsay have some friends down that way as does Wynn."

Blanche asked, "So we'd come back up here for Christmas next year?"

Well, I suppose this was inevitable and time to let the cat out the bag, "Um...well..about that...we won't be here then."

Mother asked, "So you will be down our way then?"

I told her, "No. We won't be in Arizona anymore. So The McGrawl's and us are going to relocate to Tennessee. We are having a house renovated and should be done this coming summer."

Mother did not seem disappointed rather more curious, "But what about your work? I am guessing Sara and Lindsay are going to work with Abby?"

Laura commented, "Sara for sure, Lindsay may only be part time."

I explained, "Yeah, The McGrawl's are going to open a computer store on the next block over from Laura's store. As far as my work goes, about 95% of what I do now is all remote. As far as on site work goes, after June 30th next year that will be delegated to my field technician Marty McPi. He handles most of the repair work for my non-local clients such as those out in Vegas and a couple I have in Texas."

Blanche asked, "Where are you guys going to be?"

I told her, "About a couple miles up the road where were staying at Lindsay's niece's place. Y'all are welcome to come out anytime. We hope you will come out for Christmas."

Marc and Martina happened to hear out discussion and Martina asked, "Does than invitation apply to us as well?"

I laughed, "Of course. Lindsay would love to see you. Anytime you two want to get away just let us know. It is going to be a good size place so we won't be as cramped as we are in here."

Mother asked, "When did you decide to do this?"

I explained, "Well, when we were out there in August to do the Cheshire's Farms Cafe project, The McGrawl's had expressed interest. I had only been doing the remote projects for a couple months, so was not sure how well that was going to work out. They ended up moving back in with us at that time. So when we out last month to work on getting Abby's store up and running Lindsay and I started doing a lot of research. At that point it was only Lindsay, Laura and Sophie who knew that I was considering this. The day before you and Blanche arrived I took Andy, Sara and Wynn to look at the property where we'd be living."

Lindsay had come downstairs and added, "Then we showed Andy the retail space that could be our new store. We will sell our shares of PC's ad Things to the other stakeholders."

I continued, "They all agreed it would be a nice change. It is so relaxing out there and I love how everything is so close together. It is so difficult out here with everything so sprawled out."

Blanche commented, "Yeah, that is the downside to being in the suburbs. Even where we are we have some stuff close, but still certain things we need to head down to Nogales or up to Tucson."

Mother was excited, "Well, this will be nice. Gives us an excuse to get away....come out to see Ron AND Abby!"

I added, "We'd still be coming out to Arizona for Thanksgiving at The Holstein Ranch as we normally do."

We chatted for the next couple hours. Maya and Peaches told me they were leaving shortly. Maya asked, "Did I hear something about you guys getting a place in Tennessee?"

Sara explained, "Yes, next summer."

Maya didn't quite understand what she had heard, "Oh, so you are getting a vacation house?"

I told her, "Not exactly, we are going to be moving out there. Sara is going to work with my sister at her store. Lindsay may to, but her and Andy are going to open their own computer store not far where Laura is. Place is going to be fairly large and plenty of guest space. So you two are welcome to come out anytime."

Peaches asked, "Can I bring Cream?"

I told her, "Sure. There will be lot's of space for her to run around."

Maya commented, "She doesn't run around much these days...she ain't a puppy no more."

I laughed, "Well, none of us are as active as we used to be."

Peaches commented, "I know, at least Martina does Yoga once a week. Be nice to get away from the summer, though it is doesn't seem so bad now."

I told her, "Ah...yeah been out here long enough, you gotten used to it. Well, see you two over the weekend."

After they left, Marc and Martina came over to us. Marc asked, "Any plans for this place?"

I told him, "Will likely have my Realtor list it once we get out to Tennessee." I joked, "Why are you interested?"

Marc replied, "May be." I knew Marc well enough to tell when he was being serious or joking...in this case he was being serious.

I asked, "Really?"

Marc told me, "Yeah, why not. The condo is too small for us and cramps Martina's style..."

I wasn't following, "Okay, I know Martina likes to be topless in a pool, but we don't have a pool here."

Marc laughed, "That too or sunbath nude, but she likes to entertain and have her friends over. Plus, she has been getting requests for more private Yoga lessons. She could use the studio to hold group sessions. When were y'all leaving?"

I told him, "I'd say around May or June, depends on how the remodel goes in Tennessee."

Marc advised me, "We can work something out."

After I checked on Laura up in the FROG, I checked on mother and Blanche before heading to bed. After I changed and got into bed Sara commented, "Well, that went better than you expected."

I concurred, "Indeed. Still need to talk to The Zinfandel's and Linda. So get this, Marc is interested in buying the house."

Sara commented, "Makes sense from what Lindsay has told me."

I asked her, "Which is?"

Sara told me, "The condo is small and she would like to do private yoga classes...oh and I've heard she used to throw some wild parties back in her day!"

I laughed, "Yeah she did and might still. One of those you can take the girl out of the Honky Tonk..."

Chapter 25: Jumping Ship and Tennessee Here we Come!

The next morning we all head out to Old Town Scottsdale for brunch. Mother and Blanche returned to Tubac the next day. Laura and Sophie flew back to Tennessee that Sunday after their meeting. Monday morning I decided I should talk to Gary. I called his Deer Valley store and Lulu informed me was in a meeting and would have him call me once done. I was working on a small project when he called me a couple hours later. I asked, "How's Bunny and Bernie...and how are you dealing with Claudette?"

Gary told me, "Bunny and Bernie are doing great. Bambi finally had enough of their mother and basically told her what Bunny wanted to say, but wouldn't...so Claudette headed back to Wickenburg yesterday. The house is finally quiet. So what's going on with you?"

I explained, "Well, we had out first and *last* Christmas in this house."

Gary laughed, "Cain't stay in one place very long can you. So where you all off to now?"

I told him, "Well this won't be until maybe May or June, but we found a place out in Tennessee a couple miles from where Laura is. Were just tired of Arizona, the rat race and how sprawled out everything is."

Gary understood, "It is a lot different out here than Vegas. Sometimes I regret coming out here. Bunny and Bambi don't really mind either way as they both work independently. If it were not for Zac Acme having established himself and

the business over the course of 25+ years I doubt I'd would have made it out here. It is hell of a lot better than Los Angeles, but still there are days I miss Vegas. Hell, there are days I ask myself why don't I just shut down the Phoenix location and go back to Vegas? It is funny Zac and I have talked about this numerous times. Him and Aimee love it out here, neither of them can stand Vegas. It just not the same out here from when we came."

I reminded him, "I know what you mean. I first came out here in 1993, it was so open, empty...now everywhere you look it is heavily developed. I know Vegas has seen the same thing, but Phoenix has been far worse."

Gary added, "But, Phoenix is a lot bigger and most of Vegas 'population' is tourist. Get away from The Strip it is not so bad."

I replied, "I know. Laura had a place in Henderson and liked that area. Just trying to get anywhere is time consuming as heck. Still not as bad as LA, but still I thought I got away from that when I left there."

Gary asked, "So what does this mean for our service agreements?"

I told him, "You will get a new agreement in April effective July 1st, which states on-site repairs will be performed by our field technician. If it is something major or an upgrade I can always fly out to take care of it for a premium."

Gary replied, "Sounds reasonable. So, hypothetically speaking: should I sell the Arizona operations back to Zac Acme and move back to Vegas, what would that mean?"

I told him, "If Zac still wants our services, he would need to enter into his own agreement and you would only be needing to deal with Vegas."

Gary seemed intrigued, "Hmm...interesting. You know Henderson/Vegas is about three to three and half hours from Wickenburg...it is lot less likely Claudette could show up unexpectedly."

I laughed, "Yeah, but I am sure Bunny feels different about that."

Gary laughed, "No, she's the one who pointed that out. Let's just say Claudette really out lasted her welcome. So, what you going to do with your current house?"

I told him, "Oddly enough Marc and Martina are interested in it. Their condo is rather small and Martina likes to entertain and do other things she can't do at the condo. Plus she could use the studio for group yoga sessions."

Gary told me, "You know Martina is a lot nicer than you led me to believe."

I laughed, "Just what the hell is that suppose to mean? I never said she wasn't nice...just she slept with my sister while we were married."

Gary assured me, "Which of course you had me commission her a chastity belt! Giving you a hard time Ron. Well, keep me posted."

I told him, "I will. In fact I need to figure out how to get our toys and a few pieces of our furniture out there. We're pretty much doing like Laura and just buy everything new out there instead of hauling it all cross-country."

Gary agreed, "Yeah, that makes sense. You can hire on those pack-it/unpack-it yourself type of services. They'll drop off a container and once you have it loaded, they'll pick it up and deliver to your new location. Lot cheaper then hiring a moving crew or renting a truck. Well, I need to get going actually have a lunch meeting with Zac may be I'll see how serious he is about coming back into the business."

I headed out to the kitchen and found Lindsay was home and chatting with Wynn. I asked her, "Come home for lunch?"

Lindsay told me, "Sort of. I only went in this morning because of Miss Womack."

I told them, "Well, I broke the news to Gary. He didn't seem to terribly upset. I get this weird feeling The Zinfandel's might be leaving Arizona as well."

Wynn seemed surprised, "Seems odd. He has the business out here plus the girls' parents are close."

I added, "Too close. Apparently Bambi had enough of their mother and sent her back to Wickenburg."

Lindsay laughed, "Yeah, that sounds like Bambi, she won't take crap. Bunny doesn't want to ruffle feathers."

Wynn added, "Well, she pretty much wears the pants in the household if you know what I mean...."

I added, "As far as the business goes, he might sell his Phoenix share back to Zac and run Vegas with Cristina. He finds it lot easier to do business in Vegas than out here. So that just leaves Linda. How do I managed to save the worst for last?"

Lindsay advised me, "Well you are going to have to wait a while. Guess her and

Dundee took off somewhere after Christmas. She told Miss Kitty she'd be back in a couple weeks."

Later that day Victor called, "Hey Ron, you have a few minutes to talk?"

I was wondering what was up, "Sure what's going on?"

Victor told me, "So you know how you wanted to reconfigure the stairs to the second floor?"

I replied, "Yes, why?"

Victor explained, "Well it is good thing you did. When we ripped out the old stair we discovered the structure was rotted. We also discovered some cast iron piping that was leaking. Funny thing is, it appears that plumbing was for the old laundry room as the powder room, kitchen and all other bathrooms all had copper piping. There's extensive water damage, but it is only isolated to below the stairs. I've sent you some pictures along with an estimate of what it will take to repair and remediate the damage. Fortunately, we had already planned on redoing the plumbing to the washroom anyway with the new layout."

I assured him, "That's fine. This is why have contingency budget, for unexpected not so little things like this."

Victor was relieved, "Wish all my clients were as understanding as you!"

I told him, "This not my first rodeo! Been through several remodels and as an IT installer, I've run across all kinds of interesting issues...oh there's a cinder block fire wall behind this fire-rated Sheetrock. Or in the case of the infamous Chugwater project, we almost burned down the building the first day."

Victor asked, "Was that the 'it looked smaller on paper' project? How?"

I laughed, "Yeah it was. Faulty backup power system and it was the client who provided the system. I have no idea where he got it from. For all I know, it could have 'fallen off a truck'. All I know is I didn't like the looks of it and really didn't want to connect my laptop to it. So I asked if they had anything else I could use to test with. They presented me with this old school analog tube TV that was likely as old as Leslie. So we connected it to dedicated outlet on the upper floor which is connected to the power system on the bottom floor. Most of us were downstairs and when I switched the breaker for the dedicated outlet, the main breaker tripped. The building went dark and the fire alarm went off. My sister-in-law was with me on that project, since it was for their father. Anyway, we had walkies and she comes on and says the TV is on fire. Meanwhile in the server room the power system was still smoldering, though there really wasn't much left

of it. Luckily the fire department was close and the alarm was monitored. To this day we still refer to it as the 'Flaming TV' job. Of course the irony of this was, it was all new construction. So, yes I am well aware of what CAN go wrong during a remodel."

Victor laughed, "Well that beats my finding knob-and-tube aluminum wiring in pre-1900's farm house and the clients having no idea it was there. Worse yet is they had an inspector who must not have looked at the panel as there was no mention of it in their report. Hopefully, we won't run into any other issues. I'll keep you posted."

We have an informal get together with Marc and Martina along with Maya and Ana on New Year's Eve. A couple weeks later mother called, "Say Ron, when did you say you were going back to Tennessee for an inspection?"

I replied, "Sometime next month. Victor wants me to see the progress as well as start picking out design and finish options. Why?"

Lorena replied, "Well, Blanche and I have been talking and as much as we like it here in Tubac, it seems to much nicer out there in Tennessee. Blanche loved the downtown area how close everything is. Plus, we'd be able to see you and Abigail more often. Just a thought." She didn't press it anymore so I was not sure what to make of her phone call.

A month later Victor called, "Hey Ron, good news. We've made a lot of progress. When can you come out here and take look at where we stand. This would be the time to make any adjustments as well as start picking out finishes."

I told him, "Let me look at my job queue and my current bids..." I reviewed everything, "Looks like late next week. I am not sure if Sara can come out, I should bring Wynn so she can make sure the kitchen and adjoining areas work for her. Let me get back to you on that." That evening I consulted with Sara and she informed me she would not be able to come out with me as Kayré was going to be on vacation. I talked to Wynn and she agreed it would be good if she came to give her feedback on the bottom floor. Lindsay advised me she would like to come as she wanted to discuss with Victor their plans for the store. Also, she was going to enlist her sister to help get some fixtures for their store too. I called Victor and informed him, "So Wynn, Lindsay and I can come out next Friday. Lindsay wants to discuss the plans for their retail space with you."

Victor told me, "That works. You going to be staying at The Cheshire's?"

I told him, "Most likely, I'll have Lindsay take care of that. I will need to get a hold of my travel agent and find out what kind of a charter he can get us."

Once I wrapped up with Victor I called mother, 'So you've been asking when we are going back to Tennessee. Lindsay, Wynn and I are heading out there next Friday. Likely come back that Sunday.'

Lorena replied, 'Ah okay. Let me talk to Blanche and I'll get back to you.'

I replied, 'Um okay...why?...' Lorena had hung up before I could ask her. I found Wynn and Lindsay, 'Okay, so I've told Victor next Friday and I am thinking we will come back that Sunday. Need to call Frosh Travel Services to make arrangement for our transportation to and from.'

Wynn advised me, 'Your mother is holding on your office line.'

I went back to my office, 'What's going on mother?'

Lorena asked, 'Can we come out with you three? We'd like to at least take a look and see what our options are out there. A 'Scouting Mission' if you would.'

Boy this sounded familiar, 'Sure...pretty much what my trip was back in November, besides getting Laura's retail space and home setup. So you guys want to come up here the night before and we all fly out together?'

Lorena replied, 'That would work. So we'd see you next Thursday.'

I told her, 'Yes. I'll have Victoria our Realtor, Dave's sister get a hold of you.' I headed back to the kitchen and advised Wynn and all, 'So, Mother and Blanche want to come out with us. A 'Scouting Mission' as she calls it.'

Lindsay commented, 'Sure seems like everyone is jumping ship suddenly.'

I headed to my office to call Victoria, 'Hey Victoria, Ron Merlot here. So Lindsay, Wynn and I are coming out next Friday. Seems my mother and Blanche are interested in possibly getting a house out there. Not sure if they are looking for a summer home or full time. Anyway, let me give you her contact info. Lorena Merlot phone is 520-555...' After I finished with Victoria I called Marc, 'Hey is this the Frosh Travel Agency?'

Marc laughed, 'Hmm...well you know if this gig at the resort doesn't work out, I could always try my hand at this full time! What do you need Ron?'

I explained, 'Flight for five the following Friday to Nashville. Going to need a rental car as well. Ideally, want to return that Sunday.'

Marc told me, 'Okay, let me see what I can find. By the way, Martina and I have talked and if you are interested in selling the house to us we are wanting to buy it

from you.”

I replied, “Good to know. Once we get closer we will work out the details. One less thing for me have to deal with.”

Marc joked, “Don’t suppose you’ll leave your toys for us.”

I laughed, “As much as a pain it is going to be to get that stuff shipped out there, I can’t do that...” I got to thinking the conversation Gary and I had earlier, “However, Gary might be wanting to part with his. They may be heading back to Vegas, not sure yet. Think he is getting fed up as well....or they’re trying to get further away for Claudette.”

Marc asked, “Who’s Claudette...oh wait....she’s his mother-in-law.”

I replied, “Yep. Apparently, she outlasted her welcome and Bambi sent her packing back home after Bunny wouldn’t. Gary seems to find it easier to business in Vegas than out here.”

Marc agreed, “Yeah....with his line of work. Alright, I’ll get back to you shortly.”

Later that day Marc sent me all the info. I confirmed with Leslie that we’d be able to stay at the farm house. Thursday afternoon Mother and Blanche arrived, Wynn showed to the southern suite. Marc arranged for airport transportation and we were taken to Deer Valley on Friday morning. Four hours later we had landed and had our rental car. I called Leslie and she told me she would be there by the time we got in. We arrived at the Farm House and Leslie showed us to our rooms. While everyone was getting freshened up I called Victoria, “Ron Merlot here. We’ve made it and are at the Cheshire Farms. Should I drop off my mother and Blanche at your office?”

Victoria told me, “Since you have a car, that will work. I can take them in my car to show them around. Victor is at your place now, so you can meet him there.”

We arrived at Victoria’s office and I walked in with mother and Blanche. Victoria’s assistant was on the phone but, recognized me and pointed to Victoria’s office. We went down the hall and I knocked on Victoria’s door, “Ron, Lorena and Blanche come on in.”

I reminded her, “Wynn and Lindsay are waiting for me, so need to get going. Call me when you all are done.”

Victoria told me, “Yes, I’ll do that.” She turned her attention to mother and Blanche, “Okay, Lorena and Blanche, I have found several properties that fit your criteria. I’ll let you take a look at the listings and we can narrow those down to

ones you want to view..."

A few minutes later the three of us arrive at the house. From the front it did not appear anything had happened other than marking for the new porch. However, upon walking up the driveway past the Tack Room we saw the framing for the new additions. On the other side of the driveway was an area staked off where the future garage building would be. Rounding the corner we saw the new extended kitchen. Victor came out, "Ron, good to see you. So, as you can see we've gotten a lot done. Come on in out of the cold and we discuss this further." We entered through a new door as Victor explained, "So this will be the access to your outdoor living. This current door is temporary until you decide what type of door you want installed. This to the left leads to Wynn's new area. Lets take a look at that first. So, by extending it to the east a bit more were able to move the closet and bathroom on that east wall. You will have windows on that wall near the top to provide some natural light. As of right now we have the bathroom plumbed for a shower only. Will that work, or did you want a tub as well?"

Wynn told him, "No, shower only is fine. As would a single vanity."

Victor told her, "We did do a single. You will still need to choose your shower finishes and what type of vanity you would like to do."

I asked, "Don't we need to do that for *all* the bathrooms?"

Victor stood corrected, "Well...yes. But, this is Wynn's. Also, to add some separation we will have barn door closing off the bath and closet area. So...moving along. We will head into the kitchen." We walked into kitchen and saw the entire area had been gutted. The existing powder room and coat closet were all that remained.

I looked around, "Wow, this area is huge."

Victor reminded me, "Yeah, well you are going to have a huge island. So let me show you what we did with this east wall. We had to install a new header beam to support the upper floors. Here is the kitchen layout, let me know if this works or if you want to move the fridge, sink and/or stove. Ideally we should leave the sink where it is as it is centered for this area and there will be window at the sink. Keep in mind you will have a small prep sink in the island."

Wynn looked at the plans and then asked us, "What do you think? Swap the stove and refrigerator?"

Lindsay and I looked at the plan and we saw the refrigerator was going to on the far side of the kitchen. I agreed, "Yeah, that's a bad location. If someone wants to get something out of the fridge, they have to walk through the prep area."

Wynn added, "Not to mention that put the stove in a high traffic area. "

Victor looked at the plans and commented, "Yeah, this current layout does not make sense. I was basing it somewhat off the old layout, but now that we opened this up it doesn't work. See this is why I wanted y'all here in person. Okay, so I will note the new locations on this here plan. Quick design question regarding the back wall of the kitchen. Did you want uppers or do floating shelves?"

Lindsay told her, "You are going to have a lot of storage space with all the lowers along this wall..."

Victor added, "Plus you will have more lowers on the north wall to about where that second window is, though you may choose to have a bank of drawers in that section. We are not going to do uppers there because of the limited space. Also, the island the side which faces into the kitchen will have a cabinets. The wine fridge will also be built in on the right side, the side which faces the stairs. Dishwasher won't be in the island since you will only have a prep sink. Dishwasher will be on the right side of the sink. We will have a microwave built into the island."

I had been thinking with having mother and Blanche here plus others I don't the island would work at as well as having a huge dining table, "I know this a bad time to ask this, but could we scrap the island?"

Lindsay was confused, "Why?"

I explained, "For one this kitchen is so big as it is especially with it being expanded out, an island would make it feel small. Plus, if mother and Blanche end up out here, you know they are going to want having dinner here with Laura and Sophie. A huge dining table which could seat say twelve would function as well and not make the kitchen look so small."

Wynn suggested, "Well if we do away the island, we can have the sink over on the north wall and put the stove where the sink was going before. Would need to find new place for the microwave and wine fridge"

Victor told her, "Okay, so the dishwasher has to be next to the sink. We can put on the left side if we move it. Wine fridge can go on the south end of the counter. Microwave, you could just yourself a counter top model. Hmm...so the sink would have been in front of the big east window, we can't put a stove there because of the hood, though it would function much better there..."

I looked at framed wall and asked, "Are we committed to this framed layout?"

Victor told me, "No...since it is the rear we can make changes without needing to get approval...why what are you thinking?"

I explained, "Instead of the big window in the center, why don't we put a couple smaller windows on each side of the stove. Also, lets leave the fridge where it was going to be since there is no longer an island there is much more open space."

Victor looked at the wall and the plans, "You know, that would work. Actually saves you a little money too since we wouldn't have to special order the window as well as deleting the island. Okay, so did you want the drawers?"

Lindsay advised Wynn, "Get the drawers, it makes getting your pots, pans, baking dishes so much easier. We had that at the condo and that was something I never realized how much I liked until we moved into your current place. But as I was going to say stick with the open floating shelves."

I agreed, "Yeah, we want get that natural light so the kitchen is not so dark. That was the reason I had decided against the covered porch back there." Wynn agreed with all of us.

Victor noted our changes and then told me, "I have a friend who is a wood worker by trade and does custom furniture. I could have him commission you a large table. We can do a chair on each end and benches along the side. You said you wanted seating for twelve?"

I confirmed, "Yes, I think that should be enough. That would be great, once less piece of furniture to buy."

Lindsay asked, "Didn't we have a large table like that at The Acme House?"

I replied, "Yes, we did in that grand dining room. Remember the guy who sold Zac the house had many kids."

Victor told me, "I'll get in touch with him. Should be done and installed by the time you move in. Okay, moving along as you can see we have the stairs redone now, coming into the kitchen. We've added a new pantry. The door is going open in towards the shared wall with the washroom. You have plenty of shelving on the left side and then storage for bulky items under the stairs."

Wynn took a look inside, "Wow, this is very deep still plenty of space."

Victor took us over to the new mudroom. "We are entering the mudroom this all used to be kitchen. There will be a built-in bench along this right hand wall with storage underneath. Plus hooks to hang your coats. Also, more storage above. To

the left will be more of the same and then an opening into the washroom. I assume you do want a sink in there?"

Wynn replied, "Hmm..maybe a doggy bath would fit better there...is this where the entrance is going to be?"

Victor told her, "We can move it to the left side of the room...."

Lindsay asked, "How about in the center?"

Victor looked at the framed wall, "Yeah we could do that. The sink or bath is going to go along that wall below the window. Beyond that door is small covered porch then a walkway to the driveway."

I really wasn't paying attention to the conversation but thought Wynn had requested a doggy bath, "Did you say doggy bath?" Wynn nodded yes to which I replied, "We don't have a dog..."

Wynn laughed, "Not yet we do...."

I was surprised but didn't matter to me, "If you want a dog, I have no issues."

Wynn told me, "Kind of got spoiled whenever I would watch Cream."

Victor noted the changes and advised us, "Let's head back to the kitchen then hang a left and go around the corner. Now we come to front entry. To the left is the existing powder room which we reconfigured. You have small storage area across from the commode."

Wynn commented, "Ah, nice. A place to store extra towels, bath tissues and cleaning supplies."

Victor opened a door across from the main entry and explained, "Coat closet. So now, you see we have taken out the old door to the tack room and created a nice cased opening. Straight ahead is hall with access to bathroom shared by the two guest rooms on that side. To the left here is the sitting room. To the right will be Ron's office. Oh, the fireplaces have been inspected and cleaned. The two guest rooms, sitting room and Ron's office will be part of a ductless HVAC split system. All bedrooms and Ron's office will have ceiling fans, which you still need to choose. The upstairs bedrooms are all connected to the central HVAC system as is the living room and kitchen."

Lindsay looked at the sitting room, "Bigger than I thought it would be."

Victor reminded her, "We are going to add shelves on the south wall."

I asked, "Why not both?"

Victor explained, "Besides making the room narrow, the split system HVAC unit will be on that wall."

I replied, "Okay that make sense."

Victor told us, "Let's head upstairs. Not much has changed up here other than where the stairs come out now. The two non-suites have been made slightly larger."

I pointed to the smaller of the two and told Lindsay, "This one will be your office. The other shall be yours and Sara's activities room."

Victor told me, "Oh your suite will have a claw foot tub. By us shrinking the shower slightly and moving the linen closet into the main closet we could accommodate the tub."

I told him, "Nice, Sara will like that." As we made our way to the middle of the hall I noticed a new opening, "No more door number five!"

Victor laughed, "Yeah that is gone now. These stairs have been redone as well. As we go up keep in mind this area is not finished in regards to the stairs. Now it took some work, but were able to get a powder room up here. Plus two changing rooms and a closet while keeping the window unobstructed. The other three-quarters of the area is open. We will install a Big Ass Fan in this open area, plus we will have split system ductless HVAC systems on both ends."

Wynn looked at the space, "Looks about as big as we have now."

I laughed as I thought about getting everything up there, "Yeah, the fun part is going to be getting everything up here. Oh well, I'll have Andy and Wynn."

Lindsay commented, "Leslie can help as well, she is strong."

Victor told us, "So that is it for the main house. I assume you saw the area for the new garage structure. We will get the pad laid in April and that should be done in May. I am thinking after Memorial Day for you to come back for a near final walk through. So y'all are still in town tomorrow?"

I replied, "Yes, we leave Sunday morning."

Victor advised us, "Okay, I'll have our designer get in touch with you to arrange a time tomorrow to meet. You should allocated about 3-4 hours. So Lindsay, I still

have some time left today did you want to discuss your retail space?"

Lindsay replied, "Yes, if we can."

I happened to check my phone and noticed the time, "Good grief how is it already after three? Of course it is only one back in Arizona."

We headed over to The McGrawl's store. Lindsay and Victor were only in there for about 10-minutes as there was not much that he would need to do. The counter, fixtures and displays Lindsay would enlist her sister to help with. Victoria called my cell, "Ron, your mother and Blanche are done for the day. Did you want me to drop them off back at The Cheshire's Farm?"

I advised her, "We're over in downtown right now. Your husband is going over some details with Lindsay for their retail space. We haven't eaten since this morning...um..." I looked around and saw the pizzeria, "You know what, we have not yet tried the pizza place yet. We'll be over there shortly, so if you want to drop them off that'd be great."

Victoria told me, "I can do that. Victor and I likely will grab some food ourselves whilst we are there. I'll text him to let him know."

A few minutes later we were at the Pizzeria. It sort of reminded me of the old Vinnie's when they were in the gas station. Mother and Blanche came in with Victoria. I asked mother, "So how did it go today?"

Lorena replied, "Not bad, we've narrowed it down a bit. We'll sleep it on tonight and narrow it down to two and look at them again tomorrow and come up with our final answer."

Well, that made things a little easier on me given we would be going to the design center tomorrow, "Okay, that's good. Tomorrow the three of us need to head into the 'big city' to make our design selections. Now, Victoria and Victor, what's good here?"

Victor laughed, "The pizza of course!"

I replied, "I would hope so. We have five in our group."

Victoria told us, "Get a super large that will be plenty for you."

We ordered our Pizza and I asked mother, "So, is this going to be a summer home or vacation home?"

Lorena replied, "Oh no, we'd be coming out here full time."

I was surprised, "Hmm...okay thought y'all liked Tubac...of course with Laura running away..."

Blanche joked, "She can run, be she can't hide!"

I laughed, "Oh as if our mother didn't after our father's death."

Lorena tried to defend herself, "I told Laura where I was....I had no idea where you were after you two went your separate ways. She claimed she didn't know where you were..."

I was dumbfounded, "Oh hell no! She was bloody aware of where I was. She had her little affair as 'Ann Marie' with Martina at the Fairy Duster house while I was away on business. She also knew Martina and I were married."

Lorena insisted, "Well she would not tell me where you were. Anyway, Tubac is getting too crowded and expensive."

I replied, "Sounds like the Phoenix Metro area. You know the Zinfandel's are considering going back to Vegas. Gary is not too happy in Arizona. Then Bunny and Bambi want to get further away from their mother. So if you are doing this when would be coming out here?"

Lorena told me, "Couple months. We need to sell the Tubac house first, but the local Realtor says demand is so hot right now, we should not have any issues finding a buyer."

I told her, "Well, after this visit we are not due back until around Memorial Day. Well Laura will be happy to have you out here. Does she know about this?"

Lorena explained, "No. Not yet. May be the five of us should get together with her tomorrow night. Does she know y'all are here?"

I replied, "Yeah. But, I told her in advance I likely wouldn't see her until Saturday or Sunday."

Lorena told me, "We'll work something out tomorrow once we are all done."

I advised them, "She normally 'leaves' around four on Saturdays though the store is open until six. Miranda and Leslie usually close."

As we finished and were presented with the check Victoria told us, "This one is on us!" Victor's phone beeped, "Ah...okay my designer can squeeze you in around half past noon tomorrow."

I told him, "Should work. Send me the address."

Victoria told Mother and Blanche, "I'll be by to get you two around nine."

The next morning we had breakfast at The Cheshire's Farms cafe. We made it back in to Nashville around noon and found the designer's office. We spent nearly the entire allotted three hours picking out everything from top to bottom for the house. Victoria called, "Hey Ron, your mother and Blanche made their 'final selection' earlier and should be done with the paperwork in about half hour. Have y'all tried the Other Steakhouse yet?"

I asked her, "There is more than one?"

Victoria replied, "Yes. This one is a couple blocks east of the downtown. I'll send you the address."

I looked up the address and saw the location. I called Laura, "Hey Sis. We're still in Nashville. Just wrapped up with the designer. Victoria suggested we should try The Other Steakhouse tonight."

Laura replied, "Oh yeah, Miranda and Leslie keep talking about it. They say it is lot nicer than the one in downtown. Yeah, Sophie and I can do that. Should be able to meet you there around half past four?"

I told her, "Works for us." I texted Victoria 'Laura good to meet at The Other Steak House 4:30'. Victoria replied back, 'We will be done. See you then.'

We made it out to the Other Steak House as expected and saw Sophie's truck in the parking lot. Victoria pulled in the parking lot in her Cadillac Escalade and dropped off mother and Blanche. We walked in and noticed Laura and Sophie were not in the lobby. I asked the hostess and she replied, "Ah yes...Ron Merlot she did say they were expecting you. However, she only said three more, but we can accommodate. Follow me." She lead us to where Laura and Sophie were seated and told Laura, "If you step away from the table for a moment, we will make it larger to accommodate your larger party." Laura was confused as she got up and the hostess reached under the edge of the table and pulled up a leaf for an extra two seats. "Alright here you go. While you are looking over the menu what would you like to drink?"

Wynn told me, "I can drive y'all back if you want to have wine."

I told the hostess, "Bottle of White Zinfandel please."

In all the confusion Laura hadn't notice Mother and Blanche until they sat down

with us, "Mother what are you doing out here!?"

Lorena replied, "Same thing as Ron...well sort of...except *our* house won't require extensive work."

I joked, "Hey, it's what they call a 'fixer upper'!"

Laura was confused, "Wait, what? You two bought a house out here?"

Lorena replied, "Yep. Not too far from here...I think. It is on the eastern border of town. Guess opposite of where Ron and The McGraw's will be."

Laura had a general idea, "Okay, so y'all would be about 15-minutes tops from us. Why? When?"

Lorena told her, "Because we are tired of Tubac; it is crowded and expensive. Plus when we came out here for Thanksgiving, we just fell in love with the area."

Blanche added, "Love the big trees!"

Lorena explained, "Just need to sell the house in Tubac, which shouldn't take very long. We hope to be out here by May."

I commented, "That will work. We're suppose to come back out around Memorial Day to do a near final walk through. Victor is saying the house should be ready by mid-June barring any unforeseen delays. I still need to deal with Linda as would need to find a good point where Sara and Lindsay would be able to transition over to your store."

Lindsay commented, "I may not be there much in the beginning given Andy and I will have our own store."

Laura told her, "That's fine I have Miranda and Leslie....except Leslie won't be helping me out much once the kids are out of school for the summer. But, I will have Sara. Have you talked to Gary yet?"

I explained, "Yeah...in fact they are talking about leaving, going back to Vegas. Gary is having a tough time with the business out here and I am guessing Zac is getting restless in retirement..."

Laura laughed, "Yeah....much like Linda!"

I added, "Also Bunny and Bambi want to have more distance between them and their mother."

Laura asked, "She still staying with them?"

I replied, "Nope, Bambi finally had enough and told her it was time for her to go home after Christmas."

We wrapped up for the evening. I told Laura, "Likely won't see you again until late May. Even then I am not sure how long I will be in town or who will be with me."

Lindsay informed me, "I will be for sure, want to start getting displays, fixtures and such for our store."

Blanche told us, "We likely will be here by then. We'll let you know when we know more."

I told them, "Same here."

Sunday morning we returned to Arizona in time for Lindsay to make it for the weekly Budget Holstein meeting. Throughout the week I tried calling Linda each morning, but kept going to voice mail. Finally on Thursday afternoon she called me back, "Hey Ron, sorry Dundee and I were down in Cancun for a bit of a vacation."

I told her, "Well I need to discuss some matters with you. This pertains to your Thirsty Cactus store, well all your stores actually. So, we are going to moving to Tennessee sometime in June."

Linda asked, "You, Sara and Wynn?"

I clarified, "and the McGrawl's."

Linda replied, "I see...oh crap...so what does that mean for my service agreement with you?"

I explained, "Your current agreement stands until June 30th of this year. In April, I will send a new renewal agreement with a clause that on site repairs will be handled by our field technician. If it is major or you are a looking to do an upgrade, we can at our discretion and for an additional fee come out."

Linda wondered, "Would you be coming back to Arizona during sometime of the year? Your mother and Blanche are out this way."

I told her, "The plan was for us to come out to The Holstein Ranch during Thanksgiving. Wynn and The McGrawl's included since they have friends out this way as well. Sara, Wynn and I would have Thanksgiving dinner with my mother

and Blanche. However, my mother and Blanche have decided they too want to come out to Tennessee. While I was out doing an inspection on our place we are having remodeled they came out with me and ended up purchasing a house I think out on the east side. My understanding is they will be moving some time in May."

Linda was negotiating, "Say I needed work done at the Oro Valley store and you were to still come out for Thanksgiving as planned..."

I had not idea if she was being serious, "We could work something out I suppose. As I said Wynn and The McGrawl's do have friends out your way, but there really wouldn't be a reason for Sara and I..."

Linda added, "How about joining us for Thanksgiving dinner at The Holstein Ranch?"

I advised her, "That would be something I would need to run by the McGrawl's as well as Wynn. We are sill nine-months out."

Linda replied, "True."

I was puzzled that she wasn't concerned about loosing Lindsay and Sara at The Thirsty Cactus location, "You know, I'd thought you would be more upset that you would not have Sara and Lindsay anymore at Thirsty Cactus."

Linda told me, "Kayré and Kacie can find people to replace them. I've heard very good things about one of the interns...what was his name JB, JR?"

I recalled Sara telling me, "I believe his name is MJ."

Linda remembered, "Yeah that's it. So Sara and Lindsay are going to work with your sister?"

I told her, "Sara for sure, not too sure about Lindsay. Her and Andy plan on opening a computer store on the next block over. So not really sure what her plans are going to be."

Linda asked, "Does Kacie know?"

I was not certain, "I think she does, she was out there with Laura when we bought the house. I am not sure. Regardless, we are not leaving until sometime in June."

Linda seemed to be fine with this, "Good, gives Kacie and I sometime to figure out what we shall do. Though, I think I'll just delegate this to her. I am supposed

to be retired after all."

That evening during dinner I told everyone, "Finally had a chance to talk to Linda."

Andy laughed, "How did that go?"

I told him, "Very weird. She seemed more concerned about not having us around to do something at the Oro Valley store..."

Lindsay asked, "Thought Kacie said she wanted to expand The Superstition Mountain store?"

I replied, "Yeah, I seem to recall that. I don't know...was she being serious or not. May be we are going to end up out here...well down at The Holstein Ranch during Thanksgiving...may be not. It is nine months away and I have other things to deal with."

A couple months had passed and Victor called me one afternoon, "Hey Ron, sorry to bring bad news...but we have a roof leak in the tack room. We were able to contain it before it got out of hand. However, the roofer has advised us that roof itself does not need replacing just where it joins the main house. The roof on the main house is fine, looks like it was replaced within the last few years."

I understood, "So, I guessing whomever added on the tack room did not know what they were doing when it came to tying in the roof system. So, what is this going to run me?"

Victor explained, "About \$750 in materials. The roofer will cover the labor as they would do it at the same time as they do the kitchen and the additions. Remember too, you came in about five-thousand below the original estimate for design. But, then we had the over-run with redoing both set of stairs. I'll have to look at the numbers again, I believe you still have a 'credit'. Mainly, I just wanted you to know that section of the roof needed replacing."

I had pulled up the last spreadsheet Victor had sent me, "Let me see here. As of March 30th we had a credit for about \$2157. So even with that hit still around \$1300 left. Did we factor in for the garage structure?"

Victor told me, "Yes we did, but not the interior work. That would be building the storage deck and stairs to get to said deck. I doubt that would go over \$1000 as were talking about prefab stairs, tubular steel and MDF for the deck."

I reviewed all the numbers, "So we got the place for \$650K and have allocated another \$500K for the remodel and additions. So all in I am sitting currently

around \$1.15 million. We're doing fine that is a good number."

Victor was relieved, "Okay that is good. So you want to come in before or after Memorial Day?"

I asked, "Does it make a difference as far as the completion goes?"

Victor told me, "In theory, no. We should be done by mid-June."

I told him, "Let me check with Lindsay and I'll get back to you."

Chapter 26: The Final Preparations for Our Longest Move and the First Week is the Craziest.

That evening Lindsay was working late as Miss Womack had come in. I had told Wynn to send Lindsay in when she was done with her dinner. I was checking my bids when Lindsay knocked on my office door, "Wynn said you wanted to see me."

I told her, "Yeah, come on in. So we are about ready for the near final inspection. Victor wants to know when we plan on coming out: before or after Memorial Day?"

Lindsay replied, "I have already requested the week of Memorial Day off as need to take care of stuff with our store."

I replied, "Hadn't planned on being out there more than a day...hmm...actually you know what that can work. So the first day we need to do the inspection, the second day you can go out with Leslie and do your thing while Wynn and I go furniture shopping. Yeah that will work. Okay, I'll let Victor know and make arrangements with Marc. If Wynn is still around could you send her my way please?"

Lindsay left my office and found Wynn in the Great Room, "Ron wants to see you."

Wynn came into my office and I explained, "So we are going out after Memorial Day. The first day we will do the inspection. Then the next day Lindsay and Leslie are going to do what they need to do for The McGrawl's store. I figure that day we should do out to the furniture store in Nashville and start ordering everything we need."

Wynn asked, "What furniture are we taking with us?"

I replied, "Not a lot; The three chaise lounges and the cowboy/western bedroom

set we bought from Linda. Those will get shipped with the toys and holiday decorations. So, I suppose you should take an inventory of what we have now and then build a shopping list based on the floor plan. We are going to have seven bedrooms."

Wynn was confused, "Seven? My room, yours and Sara's, The McGrawl's, the upstairs guest suite and the two downstairs rooms."

I added, "Lindsay and Sara's 'activities room', but the Western/Cowboy set may go in there...actually no I guess in the upstairs guest suite. So in a way it is only six."

The next day I called Marc and made our travel plans after confirming with Victor he would be available to do the inspection on Memorial Day. Lindsay contacted her sister who confirmed she could help Lindsay out that day to get the stuff for The McGrawl's store. Memorial Day Monday Marc had a luxury sedan pick us up and take us over to Scottsdale Airport. We arrived in Nashville early that afternoon and I let Victor know we'd be there in about an hour while Lindsay confirmed with her sister someone was at the Farm House. We arrived at the Farm House, dropped off our bags and freshened up before heading over to the house. As we rounded the bend on Salt Creek Road the house came into view. There was a fresh coat of white paint with black trim and the front covered porch was completed. We turned into the drive and saw the garage structure. Lindsay had no idea it was going to be so tall, "Wow, that is high!"

I told her, "Yeah, since you are not bringing your Mini we could go a little narrower and add a storage loft, plus space for my shop."

Victor greeted us, "Afternoon. Looks a lot different now doesn't it!"

I told him, "Very much the porch looks really nice."

Victor advised me, "It also wraps around on the north side to the chimney. That was a request made by the design review board which was all we needed to do to get the expedited approval."

I commented, "Okay, well that works well. So is the garage building done?"

Victor told me, "Not yet. It was just assembled last week, so we haven't built the inside yet. We'll do that in a couple weeks. There are still some minor things we need to take care of here. But, for the most part it is done. Let's head inside."

We walked towards the portico when I noticed the new outdoor living area. There was a sizable flagstone patio with a fire pit along with plenty of built-in seating. Wynn commented, "Oh wow, that is nice." She then noticed the grassy area, "Oh

that will perfect area for my dog to run around.”

Victor told us, “If you think this is great wait until you see the inside.” We walked into the mud room which now had the benches and storage installed. Victor pointed to the wash room, “As we had discussed during your last visit, we centered the doorway and have installed your doggy wash. Washer and dryer should be arriving in next week or so. All the other kitchen appliances are already here and installed. Plus your custom dining table with two chairs and benches has arrived. Let’s head that way.”

We made our way into the kitchen and saw the arctic white quartz counter tops and all the lower cabinet were painted a royal blue. I commented, “I was worried that the blue would be too dark, but since we only have lowers it works.” I noticed the shelves next to the window, “Those shelves turned out great there.”

Wynn walked over to her new oven, “Wow, this is bigger version of what we have now. You know I thought not having the island was going to leave us with less prep-space, but there is still plenty. That custom dining table works better to then trying to deal with stools and makes the area so much more open.”

I reminded her, “We’ll likely be doing most of the entertaining. Laura’s place is tiny and have no idea about mother and Blanche’s...mother is being very hush about their house. Heck, I don’t even know where it is other than on the east side near the The Other Steakhouse, where we ate at last time we were out.” I saw the new live edge mantel on the fireplace in the living room, it looks like an old beam, “Oh wow. Love that mantel.”

Victor replied, “That’s good as there is a smaller version in the sitting room. I had found those timbers at another job site and the property owner just gave them to me. Turn around and see what else I used them for...”

I turned around and saw the cased opening to the tack room and been ‘framed’ with the same timbers, “Oh man, that is neat. Adds a nice accent.” I walked into the old tack room and saw the ‘framing’ wrapped around, “Oh, so you did the trim in both rooms.”

Victor explained, “Not exactly, each side is one solid piece of timber. We hollowed out a groove so it sits flush into the opening. The top is also one solid piece. It took a lot of measuring and exact cuts. Now as I said, you have a smaller mantel in sitting room.”

Lindsay looked around the room, “Wow, cain’t wait until it gets cool enough we can have a fire going and do our meetings.”

Victor laughed, “Well, you need to wait until about October. So behind us is Ron’s

office, still need to do get the built-ins we discussed built. Again in the next couple weeks. Beyond here is one of the new full bathrooms and two modest bedrooms. Let's head back to the living room. So, we still have a coat closet where guest's can hang their coat, just stole some excess space from the powder room. Take a look at the powder room." He opened the door and explained, "I know the vanity is different from what we discussed, but Victoria felt it would make the room larger."

I looked and saw a pedestal sink, "Yeah that works." I turned around and noticed the storage niche, "Plus this niche gives us some storage."

Victor directed us, "Let's take a look at Wynn's suite and your new patio." We walked back through the kitchen and rounded the corner. "We installed a set of French Doors, since this opening was smaller. They lead out to the patio which then steps down to the seating area around the fire pit.

Wynn commented, "So I have close access from my suite for when I need to take my dog out." She saw the door to her suite, "May I?"

Victor told her, "By all means, it is your space." Wynn walked in and saw it was furnished. Victor explained, "The furniture is on loan as Victoria wanted to show how you could lay this room out. However, the doggy bed is yours to keep a housewarming gift from us. Hope it is good size as don't know what type of dog you planned on having."

Wynn replied, "Peaches has a Pug, but I am thinking about a Beagle. Will have to see who speaks to me at the local rescue shelter. But, yes the bed perfect size as I don't plan on having a large dog."

Victor told her, "If you slide this barn door to your right, will take you to your bathroom and closet." There was modest closet to the right and then ahead was a single vanity with a shower on other side and water closet opposite of the clothes closet."

Wynn looked around, "Oh this is perfect size."

Victor took us up to the second floor. There was not much to see there. In Sara and I's suite Victor showed us the claw foot bathtub he was able to add. We made it up to the third level and saw our new 'rec room'. Upon coming up the stairs was a hallway. On the right was a small powder room along with a large closet and on the left were two dressing rooms. At the end of the hall was a window facing the south with a view of the mountains. Going around the stairs was a large open area which should be large enough to accommodate our toys. Though I was still not sure. Victor told us, "If you want to look around some more, I'll be downstairs."

After he left Wynn noticed my staring at the space, "Everything going to fit?"

I told her, "I am not sure. The cage, the fucking machine, the ridged bondage stand, Laura's cross and the hogtie trainers. Then there is the table, the chairs and the spanking bench. I had forgotten about the spanking bench when I was figuring out how to lay this space out..."

Lindsay commented, "I really like that spanking bench!"

I told her, "As do I. It is really well built and we got a really good deal on it."

Wynn added, "The chairs really don't get used much with you having the table."

Lindsay added, "Yeah, I don't think we've used those chairs in a long while."

I examined the area again, "Okay, if we delete those I think we are okay. The cage is going to be a royal pain in the Aston Martin to bring up. Heck, I am not even sure if we could get the chairs up here anyway they are one piece. Yeah that will work, leave them for Marc and Martina."

Lindsay commented, "Keep forgetting they are buying the Arizona house."

Wynn added, "If you are looking for something else to 'donate' how about that ridged bondage stand. Peaches likes it and I am sure Maya wouldn't mind gagging and putting her in it for a couple hours."

I agreed, "We can do that. Not exactly a bulky piece but would give us more room. I'll ask Maya when we get back. Well, I think we better head down and meet up with Victor."

The next morning after breakfast at the Cheshire Farms Cafe, Leslie and Lindsay went out to see Buck while Wynn and I headed up to Nashville to furniture shopping. We setup a delivery date for the third week of June. We returned to Arizona the Wednesday after Memorial Day. I called Maya and asked, "Say, would you be interested in our ridged bondage stand for Peaches?"

Maya told me, "Sure, so when you guys moving?"

I told her, "I believe the third week of June."

Maya joked, "So when's the house warming party?"

I replied, "So, y'all want to come out? I suppose we could do something over the long July 4th weekend. I should invite Martina and Marc as well."

Maya told me, "If you are serious, the four of us will be out there. Peaches is getting into her summer funk and getting into a cooler place will help her."

I laughed, "Well let me know and we'll come get you from the airport."

Maya asked nervously, "Can Peaches bring Cream?"

I explained, "I see no reason. Wynn is talking about getting herself a dog. She had a doggy bath installed in the wash room."

Maya told me, "I'll let you know...we'll likely come in that weekend."

After I wrapped up with her I found Wynn, "Guess we're having a house warming party around July 4th. Maya and Peaches along with Marc and Martina are going to come out. Likely that weekend.'

Wynn added, "The house is going to be great for entertaining. Oh Gary informed me the shipping container will be arriving next weekend. He will help you load it, but you're on your own when it gets to the Tennessee house. As far as Sara's Roadrunner, the shipper is coming the weekend before we leave."

Over the next couple weeks we wrapped up loose ends. Victor video called me to show me the built-ins for my office. He also showed Wynn and I the washer and dryer which he explained were a 'free upgrade' since the appliance dealer was unable to get us the set we had ordered in time. He did advise me, "I want to wait until you get out here before we do the interior of your garage building. That way you can see how the space will work for you. Since everything is modular, it will only take us half day to build it all out."

Lindsay had sold her Mini to Max's daughter leaving The McGrawl's with just their Lexus. Sara's Roadrunner and The McGrawl's Lexus were loaded on an auto carrier and would be arriving in Tennessee in about another week. Marc and Martina sent me a sizable 'down payment' for the house and we made an agreement to make monthly payments for the next five years. Gary helped me load up the toys into the shipping container, along with the bedroom set from up in the FROG and the three chaise lounges. I also added, the extra inventory I had sitting in my shop, though a lot of it I had sold to Max. There were few other items such as the Christmas decorations we added into the container. The shipping container was picked up a couple days before we left. We packed a week worth of clothes and everything else we put in wardrobe boxes as were not certain when the shipping container would arrive at the new house.

A couple days before we left with Bunny and Bambi were out of town Gary stopped by after lunch and we ended up spending a few hours chatting. During

this chat he revealed a lot of things about his and our family's past I was not aware of. All in all it was quite enlightening and filled in some blanks about the events of the last decade and even some of more recent. He told me Bambi, Bunny and him would treat us all to a farewell dinner at Fleming's the next evening. We all met up down at Fleming's and noticed Bunny and Bambi were there without Bernie. Joking I asked, "Did you drop-off Bernie at the grandparent's?!"

Bunny replied, "Yes we did actually. Gives us a break."

Gary advised us, "Just waiting on Zac and Aimee, they should be here shortly."

During dinner Gary and Zac announced Zac Acme was coming out of retirement and will resume operations of the Deer Valley Acme location.

Gary told us, "The four of us are going back to Vegas, well Henderson. Not sure yet when, still working out the details with Zac, but thinking towards the end of the year. Oh and thanks for the suggestion to sell the toys from the loft to Marc and Martina. A win-win for all involved."

Saturday morning, Andy, Lindsay and Sara drove the Jeep out, while Wynn and I took the Murano which was stuffed with our computers, tablets and suitcases. Three days later we arrived back in Tennessee and stayed that evening at The Cheshire Farms. The next morning we headed to the house to unload The Jeep and Murano. The shipping container had already arrived and was placed between the street and the garage building. The McGrawl's Lexus and Sara's Roadrunner had arrived a couple days earlier. Leslie parked them in the garage building. Victor met me later in the morning and we discussed how we wanted to setup the garage building interior. Andy, Lindsay and Sara took The Jeep and Murano into town to Target. They spent most the day there getting everything we would need from paper towels, silverware, dishes, bedding, etc. Our furniture arrived as I was talking with Victor. Over the next several hours our furniture was placed. Wynn and I started unloading the storage container. First off were the wardrobe boxes which we placed in the respective rooms. We also took out and placed the two white Chaise Lounges in the sitting room and the burgundy lounge over in The McGrawl's office. The Western/Cowboy bedroom set we placed in the middle suite and would setup at a later time. What remained in the container was my shop supplies, Christmas Decorations and then our toys. We would wait a couple more days before we dealt with those.

That afternoon Andy, Lindsay and Sara arrived back from their shopping excursion at Target. I advised them, "Y'all get your beds made up and bathrooms setup then we will go to dinner. Wynn would make a quick stop at the local grocery store after dinner to pickup the basics as well as start to get the kitchen setup so she could make breakfast in the morning." A couple hours later we met

Mother and Blanche as well as Laura and Sophie at the Pizzeria for dinner. The following morning Wynn went to work on the kitchen. Andy and I worked on getting the home theatre setup in the living room. Victor came by with his crew to do the interior of the garage building. Later on the McGrawl's setup their office which was mainly displaying their collections and adding some background decorations behind the chaise for when they did a video call. Lunch was simple sandwiches and afterwards Wynn made another trip out to Target to pickup items they had forgotten the day before. She hit the local grocer on the way back too. That afternoon Mother called, "Would y'all like to join us for dinner along with Abby and Sophie at our place?"

I told her, "I think we can arrange that..however, do need to know where your house is."

Lorena asked, "Abby never told you?"

I answered her question with a question, "Has she told you where we are?"

Lorena replied, "Come to think of it no she has not. Does she know where you are?"

I laughed, "Yes, since she was sending me pictures when her and Sophie would go by on Sundays to check on the progress."

Lorena laughed, "Suppose we need to have a talk with her. We're a few minutes east of The Other Steakhouse."

She gave me her address and I gave her mine and told her, "They will all be here on Sunday for the Budget...I mean *Boutique* Holstein staff meeting. Oh...plus Martina and Marc along with Maya and Peaches are coming in for the 4th, they'll be staying with us."

That evening we met over at Mother and Blanche's house. It was single level brick ranch with three bedrooms, two bathrooms and even had a small formal dining room. The outside looked like it did when it was first built, but when we walked in the entire interior had been redone recently. I commented, "Wow, don't judge a house by its exterior!"

Lorena explained, "We are going to get the brick lime-washed soon. The previous owners remolded the interior prior to putting the house on the market. We are also going to have the deck resurfaced. Does your guy do any of that?"

I explained, "Victor is a general contractor so he has subs for any job. I'll give you his number." After dinner we chatted for a while, but we are still exhausted from getting everything unpacked and setup. I asked Laura, "So I am assuming

you and Miranda are going to meet with Sara and Lindsay at our place on Sunday for your meeting?"

Laura told us, "If you can accommodate us then yes. We are going to to them a little later in the afternoon, I think 2:00 PM."

I joked, "Hmm...and I suppose you will want to 'play' afterwards!"

Laura replied in joking fashion, "and stay for dinner?"

Wynn laughed, "Hey, if you help I don't mind. We have a huge dining table."

I added, "Plus the patio area Victoria designed. That is fine, we can rotate: I'll do the fish one week, you can do the enchiladas another week and Wynn her lasagna or spicy meatloaf." I told mother and Blanche, "Y'all can come out on a Saturday or we can come here. Abby's place is a bit small."

Laura defended her choice, "Well, I didn't know the entire family would end up out here. But, it works for our needs."

I reminded her, "That's the most important. The Acme House was way too big after Maya and Ana left and then the Sagebrush turned out to be too small for the five of us. This place we have plenty of room."

We made plans for mother and Blanche along with Laura and Sophie to come out Saturday for dinner. Wynn would make her (store bought) lasagna. Laura and Miranda would do their meeting on Sunday afternoon. The following Monday Sara would start working at The Boutique Holstein. Lindsay wasn't sure when she would start since her and Andy wanted to get their store in order. We returned that evening and all us ended up heading to bed. The next morning after breakfast Wynn and Lindsay made yet another trip to Target to get more stuff we needed. Andy and I decided we should try to unload the rest of the storage container, especially now the garage building was done. I took Andy into the building and explained, "So, the back half of the fourth bay we can setup our lab and also have a shop space. The upper level will be storage, which will mostly be Christmas stuff. We can store inventory up there too."

Andy asked, "Do you think we will take on projects out here like we did in Arizona?"

I replied, "I have no clue. May be, may be not. I don't think anything large scale like any of The Boot's jobs or Thirsty Cactus projects. Might be small little retail space upgrades. Square or WiFi upgrades may be even some onsite computer repairs."

Andy commented, "Least we don't have to deal with Linda anymore."

I decided to warn him, "Well...about her..."

Andy joked, "What is she going to move out here now?"

I laughed, "Oh God no! However, she may have some type of project lined up for us in Oro Valley for Thanksgiving week. Before you ask, I have no idea what."

Andy sighed, "We move across the country and we still can't get away from her! Oh well, shall we get the play loft setup?"

I told him, "Let's wait until Wynn gets back, at least for the table and cage. The spanking bench Gary disassembled and gave me instructions on how to reassemble."

Andy asked, "What else is left?"

I told him, "The fucking machine, Laura's cross and the hogtie trainers. Then all the accessories and clothes that go in the closet. Those are in boxes somewhere in this container...hopefully in front of the table and cage. Pretty sure Gary and Bambi put the table and cage in first so they should be all the way in the back. Everything is crated, so can't tell off hand. The crates are labeled at least."

We got everything associated with our shop and lab out of the container and into the building. Andy commented, "You are going to need a WiFi repeater in here."

I told him, "Yes we will. No hurry though."

We headed back to the storage container and the first crate we came across was labeled, 'Clothes, Shoes and Toys'. The crate was a bit heavy but the two of us managed to get it to the third floor and placed it in the closet. Lindsay and Sara would take care of getting the closet setup. The next crate was labeled 'Cross Base'. Andy asked, "What the heck is this?" I replied, "It is for the fucking machine." That crate wasn't so bad nor was the crate for the fucking machine itself. We were both getting tired and Andy joked, "Dang, much too young to feel this darn old!"

I laughed, "We can take a break. All that should be left is the hogtie trainers plus Laura's cross and those shouldn't be too bad. Oh and the spanking bench, which I think Gary and Bambi packed in multiple crates. But, yes this going up and down two flights of stairs is getting tiring. Which was also the reason I wanted to wait for Wynn to be here to help us with the cage and table." I had also forgotten about Lindsay's cage which went in their active room which I discovered once we removed the hogtie trainers from the crate. Later that afternoon Wynn and

Lindsay returned. While the three of us were able to get the cage into the play loft, the table was proving to be an issue. Lindsay called her sister who told us she'd come with an appliance dolly. Between the dolly along with Andy, Wynn and myself we finally got the table up into the loft. I told everyone, "Okay, either we ain't moving again or this is not coming with us!"

Andy joked, "Or we chuck it out the window!"

Leslie laughed, "Yeah and end up with a crater in your yard." She headed back to her truck. Gary had mentioned to me he had "upgraded" the stool for the table. Upon Andy and I unpacking the stool to attach it to the base of table I saw the new upgrades. Behind the seat of the stool were a set of rigid cuffs and there was another set attached to the base of the stool about a foot from the ground. There was an envelope with a 'key' and note from Gary explaining to release the cuffs all one needs to do is insert the key and they will pop open.

Andy looked at the upgraded stool, "Lindsay is going to like this!"

This was our first dinner at new the house and Wynn made her spicy meatloaf. After dinner, Andy and Lindsay along with Sara and I were sitting out on the patio having a beer. Andy commented, "Wow, here we are almost a year later and we actually did this!"

Wynn came out on to the patio and was not understating Andy's comment, "What do you mean?"

I told her, "The final night we were at The Cheshire's last summer Andy made a comment how it would be nice if the four of us could relocated out here and get a place together. I wasn't even sure if he was being serious at first, but when they talked about selling their shares of PC's and Things. We compromised at that time with Andy and Lindsay moving back in with us. I decided when got back I'd take a look at not only our financial's, but my job status. I was surprised when I figured out I was making more from the remote jobs than I was from the service contracts."

Lindsay commented, "Well this was an unexpected change and I honestly wasn't sure if we'd be able to pull this off. Ron and I put a lot of legwork into this. I am liking this place so far, be better once we can get settled in."

I reminded everyone, "The next couple days should give you a chance as we won't be having anyone coming over and the bulk of the move is done."

Sara asked, "What's left?"

I told her, "I still need to get my shop setup. Need to get a WiFi extender out

there and cordless phone. Plus finish up with my office. The magazines are going to go in there and then rest of the books will go into the sitting room."

Wynn added, "The play loft still needs to be organized."

I commented, "Yeah, still need to figure out the layout. Mostly going to be dependent on where the fuck machine and table goes since those need power."

Lindsay was confused, "Why does the table need power?"

I told her, "There are magnetic restraints for the wrists to do self bondage. There is also an outlet to plugin a penis milker. I think I've only ever used that feature once."

Andy added, "Didn't even know it had that feature."

I replied, "Gary added those upgrades a while back. Oh and Sara and Lindsay need to get their activities room gear unpacked."

Wynn added, "As well as the play loft there are couple boxes of toys and a couple boxes of clothes too."

I reminded them, "I am sure Laura and company will be wanting to use the play loft when they come on Saturday." I realized now that Martina was not here our Saturdays were going to be different now, "Hmm...no more Saturday morning Yoga."

Sara commented, "Actually, I believe Miranda mentioned she is a freelance Yoga instructor. But we really won't have the time or a place to do it."

Lindsay commented, "Yes she is. She usually does classes in the evenings, may be she can come over one night during the week."

I asked, "How late are y'all staying open?"

Andy commented, "Most of the stores in that area close either five or six. Friday's a lot of them stay open until seven for a 'family night'. Thinking Monday thru Thursday will be open from nine to six; Fridays nine to seven and Saturdays ten to four."

Sara confirmed, "Pretty much the same hour as Laura and what we did at Thirsty Cactus."

I commented, "Well, if she can come out one of those evening you can do your sessions in the Great Room. Just move the sofas and side tables out of the way."

In the cooler months we will have the fireplace going in there too.”

Lindsay was getting excited, “Now that would be so neat.”

I recalled, “Oh, one more thing...the middle suite we need to put the bed together and arrange the room.”

Wynn realized she had not gotten anything for that room, “Oh crap, guess I’ll be making yet another trip to Target tomorrow. Totally forgot about that room.”

I joked, “They should give you a VIP priority checkout given you are there such much!” The next morning after breakfast made one more ‘last trip’ to Target. I was reviewing my bids and job queue when she had returned and came into my office, “I think this was the final trip...for now. Can you give me hand getting the middle suite setup?”

I told her, “Yeah, I need to see how this room is going to be laid out.” We headed upstairs and entered the room. Wynn had a pile of Target bags sitting in a chair which I had forgotten we had purchased, “Oh, so there is chair in here...makes sense it is a suite. The bed should go on the wall opposite the bath and closet. We can put the chair between the windows and entry to the bath and closet.” An hour later we had that suite fully setup, not that I think anyone would be using it anytime soon.

Saturday afternoon Laura and Sophie arrived along with mother and Blanche. I gave them the grand tour which of course ended in the play loft I advised them, “Dinner is in a couple hours so enjoy yourselves.”

Sophie asked, “Would Wynn need help with dinner?”

I told her, “Since we are doing fish which will be grilled with the potatoes, there is not much for Wynn to do.”

A couple hours later we sat at the table for our first big dinner. After dinner we headed outside to enjoy the evening and chatted. Later on everyone headed out. Laura told me, “Just so you know, Leslie will not be coming tomorrow for The Boutique Holstein meeting. She’s not going to be working with me anymore since Sara and may be Lindsay will be working at my store. She’s going to be assisting her daughter with the grandkids and the Cafe. Also, Sophie will not be joining me, she has a personal project she does on Sunday afternoons. So see you tomorrow around two for the meeting.”

I asked, “Will you and Miranda be staying afterwards to play and dinner?”

Laura laughed, “Yes and I suppose we can stay for dinner. I am not prepared to

cook this weekend. I can next week when Mother, Blanche and Sophie are here as well."

I advised her, "That works. We can alternate on the Saturday meals. I am sure Wynn can whip something up tomorrow."

Wynn overheard our conversation, "I can make my Spaghetti Bolognese with garlic bread and a salad. Though I am going to need some assistance as there is a lot of prep."

Laura told her, "I can still help out. Well, we need to get going."

Sunday morning during breakfast Wynn asked, "When were they coming today?"

I told her, "I believe they are coming for the meeting at two."

Wynn thought for a moment and told me, "Okay, so I would have time to clean the bottom floor before they come. I can go to the farmer's market after lunch, though it may not take me long to get the bottom level cleaned given the guest rooms and bathroom are not being used." We had decided the full bathroom downstairs would only be used by those using the guest rooms since the powder room was just as close to my office and the sitting room. It only took Wynn a couple hours to get the bottom floor cleaned. She came into my office, "Okay, so that went quicker than I thought. I am going to head to the Farmer's Market to get the fixings for tonight's feast." Wynn returned an hour later with lots of produce.

After lunch about quarter to two Miranda and Laura arrived. Laura went to the sitting room to setup for their meeting. Before Miranda headed in I asked her, "I hear you are do private yoga sessions?"

Miranda laughed and asked, "Who started that rumor?"

I told her, "Lindsay and Sara...plus I do recall you mentioning it one time."

Miranda replied, "Oh okay, may be I did. Yes, I do why?"

I explained, "Well, Martina used to do a Saturday morning session for the family at the Arizona house."

Miranda recalled, "Oh yeah, I remember that. So, they would like me to do a session here?"

I replied, "Yes. Likely on a weeknight as our weekends are rather busy."

Miranda looked around, "I could probably do that, where though?"

I explained, "In The Great Room, we just move the sofas and tables to the side. That is what we did at The Arizona house was move the tables and chaise lounges in the studio to the wall."

Miranda could visualize it, "Yes, that could work. So who all would be attending?"

I told her, "Sara, Lindsay, Wynn and likely Laura and Sophie as well. Not sure about Leslie since she is occupied with Dave and Charlotte."

Miranda explained, "I think she'd would attend and would likely come with Charlotte. So a group of seven wouldn't be bad. I usually do around twelve so this would be nice change. Let me check with Leslie and Charlotte and find a night which works for them. I'll get back to you." She headed to the sitting room to join Laura along with Sara and Lindsay."

Laura started the meeting, "Good morning Arizona! So, joining me today are Sara Merlot, Lindsay McGrawl and Miranda Morgan. Leslie McKee is no longer going to be a full-time part of The Boutique Holstein with Sara and Lindsay joining me here."

Lindsay added, "I won't be starting for at least a couple more weeks and even then I likely will be part time. Andy and I are opening our own computer store out here, so some of my time will be occupied with that."

Sara asked, "Kayré and Kacie how are you two doing at Thirsty Cactus without Lindsay and I?"

Kayré joked, "Kacie is having to deal with customers..."

Sara replied, "That cain't be good!"

Kacie laughed, "Oh come on, just because Miss Bordeaux didn't like me, doesn't mean all the customers feel that way. No, it has not been that bad. Good news is MJ is going to be with us full time next month so that is going to help out a lot. How are things at your store Abby?"

Laura advised Kacie, "I'll defer to Miranda for the finite details. But, we seem to be doing well. Lots of customers and Friday nights are really busy. That's the night all the stores stay open an hour later and run evening only promotions."

Miranda added, "Sales are really well. I am going to take a closer look at our inventory and see what has been selling and not selling."

Kacie told her, "I can generate those reports for you and then you can let me know what adjustments you want to make."

The meeting continue until three when they all signed off. Lindsay came into the kitchen and asked Wynn, "When is dinner tonight?"

Wynn was washing all the produce she had bought earlier and replied, "Around five. I could use a helper for this as there is a lot to do."

Miranda offered, "I can help. What do you need?"

Wynn told her, "Thanks. I'm good for now. Come back in about an hour and half." Miranda agreed and went up with the rest of the girls to the play loft.

Laura came into my office, "So our first meeting here went well. I appreciate you letting us use the sitting room. Miranda, Leslie and I have been doing our meetings prior in the store and it worked, just not very well."

I told her, "Glad it is working out for you. Funny, a year ago would have never expected us to be out here. Even when I came out last November to help you get ready, I wasn't sure if Sara and I along with The McGrawl's would be out here. Never expected mother and Blanche to come out here."

Laura joked, "Who else could we get out here?"

I told her, "Well, not Gary since he is leaving Arizona, for Henderson. Doubt Marc and Martina would leave the resort, especially they just bought our Sage Brush house. Maya and Ana, I have no idea. I think Maya could transfer to any hospital or pharmacy, but not sure if Ana would want to leave Vinnie's. I know she would love to get away from the hot summers. But, also Maya has her piano at Vinnie's and she plays on the weekends. See what happens when they come out next month to visit."

Monday morning Wynn cleaned the play loft. Afterwards she headed over to the local shelter and hour later came home with a Beagle. Wynn came to my office, "Ron, meet Lucy!"

Chapter 27: Happy July 4th and The 'Activities Room'

Over the next couple days Wynn and Lucy got settled in. Wednesday morning Wynn came into my office and asked, "May I make a change to my uniform?"

I was curious as to why now when she has been wearing the same uniform for the entire time she has been with us, "What kind of change and why?"

Wynn explained, "I want to replace these high heel sandals with high heel knee boots. Lucy has already shredded a couple pairs of my fishnets and these things are almost \$25 a pair!"

I laughed, "You're the one that wanted a dog. Anyway, don't matter to me you were the one who choose your uniform. As I said before Sara's was all Martina's idea, though Martina had no idea how tall Sara would be with those heels!"

On Thursday evening Miranda came over with Charlotte and Leslie to do a yoga session. She noticed Wynn's uniform was different and commented, "Was your puppy shredding your tights?!"

Wynn laughed, "Yeah after the second pair I decided I needed to do something different. These are professional dancer grade fishnets and do not come cheap. The boots have helped, meanwhile I need to order more of the tights. Not something I took into account when getting a dog. Cream wasn't as 'jumpy' so I guess that is why I was so surprised by this."

Wynn and I assisted Miranda moving the sofas and tables to the edge. Wynn went to the entry closet and retrieved the yoga mats. An hour later Miranda came to my office, "Thanks Ron for letting us use your living room. Been a while since I've done a small yoga session. Hope to do it again next week."

I told her, "Well, Martina is going to be out here along with Maya and Ana. So perhaps the week after."

Miranda realized, "Oh yeah it is the 4th, I will be up in Nashville."

Marc had informed me Martina and him would be coming in on Wednesday morning. Maya and Peaches would not be in until that afternoon. Maya called me on Tuesday, "I know it is short notice, but could we bring Lizzie out with us?"

I told her, "Yeah, that is fine. There are three guest rooms. I believe I will be meeting you at the airport. Wynn is going to be picking up Marc and Martina; they are coming in an hour before y'all."

After I wrapped up with Maya. I texted Wynn to come to my office. She came in and commented, "Miss having the intercom, but this works. What's going on?"

I asked her, "How is the middle suite?"

She told me, "Presentable? Why?"

I explained, "Lizzie is coming out with Maya and Peaches."

Wynn replied, "Okay. Yeah, we can put her there or should we have Marc and Martina in there?"

I thought for a moment, "You know, let's put Marc and Martina in that suite. Maya and Peaches in the south room and Lizzie in the north."

Wynn reminded me, "Well you are picking them up from the airport. What are we doing for dinner tomorrow?"

I told her, "No clue. I will grill burgers and brats on Thursday and I thinking Friday we can go to The Other Steakhouse. Also, not sure about Saturday. They are all leaving on Sunday, but at different times."

Wynn told me, "I can do the spicy meat loaf tomorrow night. May be you can do fish on Saturday?"

I agreed, "Sure that would work."

The next morning after breakfast Lindsay and Andy left for their store to get things ready for their opening the following Monday. Sara took her Road Runner to The Boutique Holstein. Wynn headed to the airport in the Jeep to get Marc and Martina. I left about an hour later to get Maya, Peaches and Lizzie. Wynn arrived at the airport just as Marc was calling her, "We've arrived and are ready whenever you are."

Wynn told him, "Coming into the airport now, should be to the terminal in a couple minutes. I'm in Ron's Jeep." Wynn arrived at the terminal and quickly loaded Marc and Martina's bags.

As they drove back to the house Martina commented, "Wow, it has been a long time since I've been out here."

Marc told us, "I've never been out here. Been all around this great country, but never made it over here."

Martina asked, "So how you guys liking it out here?"

Wynn told them, "Everyone seems to be happy and relaxed. Andy and Lindsay are getting ready to open their computer store next Monday. Sara and Laura are working The Boutique Holstein. Ron has been working on remote projects but does try to get out for a couple hours of mountain biking. I like it here. It is quiet, peaceful and not as rushed." They made it back to the house and Wynn pulled around the back.

Marc was surprised, "Wow, this place is huge."

Martina saw the patio area, "Nice sitting area!"

Wynn commented, "Let me grab your bags and come on in." As she walked into the mud room she saw Lucy coming towards them.

Martina grabbed Lucy before she could escape and asked, "Who's this cute little girl?"

Wynn told her, "This is Lucy. I decided I wanted a dog. However, I didn't know she was going to constantly jumping on me and shredding my fishnets."

Martina noticed Wynn's boots, "Ah, that's why you are wearing the boots now!"

Wynn continued, "I was missing Cream. Picked her up earlier this week. She's got a lot more energy than Cream."

Martina laughed, "Well, Cream ain't a puppy anymore."

Wynn advised Martina, "That's what everyone keeps telling me. Lucy doesn't go up and down stairs at least not yet. Let's head up to your suite." Wynn took Marc and Martina up to their room. She advised them, "There are extra towels in the bathroom cabinet. Dinner is not for a few hours. The stairs going up from the hall lead to the play loft. But, I'll show you the rest of the downstairs. Ron should be back in about an hour with Maya, Ana and Lizzie."

I made it to the airport and found the cell phone lot. I texted Maya: 'Arrived. Let me know when y'all are ready'.

Maya replied back couple minutes later: 'Give us few minutes. Cream needs to do her thing!'. I left the cell phone lot and headed to the terminal building. I timed it perfectly as Maya just texted me as I was approaching the curb 'We here!'

I pulled up to the curb and loaded their bags. I told them, "Lizzie you can take shotgun. Gives Maya and Peaches some room for Cream's kennel." As we headed out I told Maya, "Oh by the way, Wynn got herself a beagle puppy."

Maya laughed, "Well, least Cream can have another dog to play with. How's it going for y'all out here?"

I explained, "Not bad. Sara is working with Laura at The Boutique Holstein. Andy and Lindsay are getting ready to open up their compute store, hopefully next week. It is a quick walk from The Boutique Holstein."

Maya commented, "Sort like at Thirsty Cactus. How's your sister doing out here?"

I told her, "Yeah, but I think it is a bit closer like they were when they were up on Scottsdale Road. From what I can tell, Laura is loving it. She loves having the set schedule and once the store closes for the day she is done, goes upstairs and she is home. None of this 'on call' and 60+ hour weeks crap she was doing down at the Ritz."

Maya understood, "Yeah, it sucks always being on a call. Seems like every time Peaches and I have a chance to be together I get called in. The money is nice, but seems like we have no life."

Lizzie joked, "Here y'all make fun of me for my music 'career'."

Maya laughed, "Well...but we have to pay the rent on the residence. Of course you do help out. The ironic part is you are likely get to spend more time there than we do."

Peaches added, "She can walk Cream when Martina is not around. Cream see's more of Martina than me."

Once we got outside the city Maya commented, "Wow, a lot more rural out here."

Peaches commented, "So many trees!"

We arrived at the house and I told them, "Here we are! Grab your bags and follow me."

Maya saw the garage, "Was that building original?"

I told her, "No we added that. Houses our four cars, Wynn's Vespa, our mountain bikes and then upper level is storage along with Andy and I's shop space. We haven't taken on any projects out here yet. Not sure if we will, still trying to get settled in."

We walked into the house and Maya commented, "Oh wow, a mudroom! Once of the places I lived at in Texas had one. Don't really see them much in Arizona."

I explained, "There is washroom to the right, which has a doggy bath."

Maya commented, "Oh so, Wynn knew she was getting a dog?"

I told her, "Yeah. Not sure how she found out about the beagle. Let's head into the kitchen."

Lizzie saw the custom dining table, "Wow, that is a huge table!"

Wynn walked over from the great room, "Yes it is. Seats up to twelve!"

Maya asked, "Well there is only ten of us."

I told them, "Plus tomorrow, my mother and Blanche plus Laura and Sophie will be coming over too. So, we will eat in shifts, like we did for Christmas."

Maya had forgotten about my mother moving out here, "Oh yeah, you did mention they have moved out here. Where are they?"

I replied, "They are on the other side of downtown. Let me show your rooms and then we can all gather in the great room." I led them towards their rooms and explained, "This is a detached bathroom that is shared between the two rooms. No one else normally uses that one since we have a powder room by the front door. Lizzie you will be in the room to the left. Maya and Peaches you will be in the room to the right. Wynn wasn't sure, does Cream sleep on top on the bed or in her own bed?"

Peaches told me, "She usually sleeps between Maya and me."

I told her, "That's fine. There is a doggy bed in there if she wants to use it. Let's head over to The Great Room for now. Y'all can head up to the play loft a little later"

They set their bags in the room and Peaches asked, "Can I bring Cream out with us?"

I advised her, "Yeah, I'll let Wynn know." I returned to the great room and told Wynn, "Peaches is going to bring Cream out."

Wynn told me, "Okay, I'll hold on to Lucy and see how they react."

Maya, Lizzie and Peaches came into the great room with Cream following behind Peaches. At first neither dog noticed the other, but then Cream saw Lucy and gave a short yip and wagged her tail. Lucy didn't seem frightened by the Pug so Wynn set her on the floor. The two dogs circled and sniffed each other. Lucy started licking Cream and then they started chasing each other around the room before finding a spot near the center of the room and laid down next to each other under the fan. Peaches commented, "They seem to get along. Nice for her to have another dog around."

Sunday morning Wynn took Maya, Peaches and Lizzie back to the airport. A little while later I took Marc and Martina back. All of them wanted to come back for Christmas. However, Lizzie would be in Tucson during that period so she wouldn't

be joining us. After lunch Wynn would work on getting the bottom floor guest rooms and bathroom cleaned before the weekly Boutique Holstein meeting. Laura arrived with Miranda and informed Sara and Lindsay, "Kacie doesn't have much to discuss this week, so it sounds like it is going to be a short meeting. After the meeting we are going to take off, Miranda and I have a little project we want to get done at the store."

Sara joked, "Thought the whole purpose of you taking on this career change was not to be working weekends!"

Laura laughed, "I know, and yet there are times I don't know what to do with myself."

Miranda explained, "It is only going to take us a couple hours, just pulling merchandise that is not selling well. I cross-referenced Kacie's report from last week and either the items will be sent to Arizona or we put those on clearance."

The meeting lasted only about twenty-minutes and they took off. Laura did say next week they would resume the normal one-hour meetings and would stay for dinner. She also informed us she would make Mother's chicken enchiladas next Saturday for our weekly 'family dinner'.

After they left Sara asked Lindsay, "Shall we break-in our 'activities room'?"

Lindsay was getting excited given her and Sara had not done anything since a couple weeks prior to us moving into this house. She giddily replied, "Oh yeas that would be great. What do you have in mind?"

Sara thought for a moment, "I could give you an erotic massage...a little bit of edging, some tease and denial, may be throw in a forced orgasm or two! Why don't you take a quick soak while I get everything prepped."

Lindsay asked, "What should I put on after my soak?"

Sara replied, "Nothing...except for a robe." Lindsay went to her suite to take deep soak. Meanwhile Sara removed the quilt and pillows from atop of the bed setting those on the chair. She retrieved some towels from the closet and set those on the bed. Sara wasn't sure how she was going to secure Lindsay to this particular bed as this bed had not been used in any of their 'High Infidelity' suites. She figured out she could attach four adjustable tethers to the headboard and foot board which then would connect to the leather wrist and ankle restraints she'd put on Lindsay. She found everything she needed in the closet and also grabbed a blindfold along with a stick vibrator. She wasn't sure about what to put the massage oil in and headed downstairs to consult with Wynn. She found Wynn in the mudroom about to give Lucy a bath, "Hey Wynn could you help me for a

moment?"

Wynn told her, "Yeah, let me put Lucy in her kennel she doesn't track mud all through the house. What do you need?"

Sara explained, "I am going to give Lindsay a massage, but I don't know what to put the massage oil in."

Wynn thought for a moment, "Um...oh I know, we have some small bowls we don't really use. There should be one which would work. Let's take a look, I believe I stuffed them in the pantry." She followed Wynn into the kitchen and into the pantry. Wynn pulled a stack of various size bowls from a high shelf, "Good thing I am wearing my 6-inch boots today. Here you go, take which ever one you think will work." Sara picked a bowl and handed the rest back to Wynn who replaced them on to the high shelf. Sara thanked her and headed back to the 'activities room' where she poured some of the massage oil into the bowl. She placed the bottle and bowl on the nightstand. She decided she should change into something more dominating and took a look in the closet. She found a dominatrix dress I had obtained years ago from a barter exchange with Linda from that trip when her sever had blown-up. She looked at the selection of shoes and found a pair of knee length boots. Sara put on the dress and looked at herself in the mirror. While she liked the look, it just didn't seem complete. She looked in the other side of the closet and found a pair of cheap black fishnet tights. The fishnets and the boots completed the look she was going for. Sara was doing a quick check of everything when Lindsay came in wearing a robe and heels. Sara handed her the leather wrist and ankle restraints, "Here slip into these while I get the bed ready."

Lindsay took the restraints and replied, "Yes Mistress!" She had put on those restraints so many times she could do it with her eyes closed.

Sara told her, "Lay down on the bed...Hmm...I need to put pillow down to boost your midsection. Oh here, put this blindfold on." Lindsay took the blindfold and placed it over her eyes. Sara grabbed a pillow and then told Lindsay, "Roll over and raise yourself up so I can stuff this pillow under you." Lindsay rolled over and arched herself enough for Sara to get the pillow underneath her. Sara informed Lindsay, "Let me get these restraints attached and adjusted. This is going to take a little bit, but next time we want to use these they'll be ready to go." She attached the tether clips to the leather restraints then adjusted the length until Lindsay was thoroughly spread out. Sara looked at her handy work, "That works! Okay, let me set a little mood music and I can get started." Sara went over to mini-bookshelf system and started a meditation/relaxation CD. She asked Lindsay, "Comfortable?"

Lindsay wasn't sure if Sara was being rhetorical or serious, "As much as I can be

spread like this.”

Sara clarified, “Nothing hurts or is numb?” Lindsay told her ‘no’ to which Sara replied, “Good, then we are ready.” Sara took the bowl of oil and placed it between Lindsay’s spread legs. She dipped her fingers in the bowl and started with Lindsay’s feet and moved her way up. She was careful to avoid making contact with Lindsay’s crotch. She noticed Lindsay had gotten quiet and wondered if she had fallen asleep, “You awake?” Lindsay mumbled something. Sara told her, “Need to do something about that.” She found a rag and wiped her hands then took the stick vibrator from the nightstand. She turned on the vibrator on low and started using it to ‘trace’ around Lindsay’s pussy. Surprisingly, this did not seem to wake Lindsay so Sara turned up the speed and inserted the tip slightly into Lindsay’s pussy. Lindsay jumped and let out a yelp. Sara laughed, “Good your awake.” With an evil laugh, “Now let the fun begin.” Over the next half hour Sara slowly edged Lindsay, bringing her so close to orgasm. Lindsay was whimpering from the frustration when Sara finally asked, “Do you want to cum?”

Lindsay replied, “Yes.”

Sara keeping to her dominatrix role, “What?”

Lindsay replied again, “Yes.” Then she realized her mistake, “Yes....mistress please let me cum!”

Sara warned her, “Be careful what you ask for. Are you sure you want to cum?”

Lindsay had no idea what was going on; all she knew is she wanted to cum so bad, “Yes Mistress. Yes I want to cum. Please Mistress!”

Sara laughed, “Very well, as you wish!” Sara turned the vibrator up to full speed and held it to Lindsay’s clit.

Lindsay cummed instantly, “Thank you Mistress!” She was expecting Sara to remove the vibrator, but instead Sara kept the vibrator on Lindsay’s clit. Lindsay could feel another orgasm building and before she had time to prepare it hit her. Sara removed the vibrator from Lindsay’s clit only to insert it into Lindsay’s pussy instead. Sara then dipped the thumb and finger of her other hand into the massage oil bowl and proceeded to rub Lindsay’s clit. This went on for another 15-minutes though for Lindsay and her countless orgasms she experience felt like an eternity.

Sara asked, “Do you still want to cum or have you had enough?”

Lindsay was almost of out breath, “No more Mistress!”

Sara turned off the vibrator and placed it back on the nightstand. She took a towel and wiped off her hands and the vibrator. She grabbed a rag and told Lindsay, "Be right back, need to get some water on this rag." Sara went over to the hall bathroom and moistened the rag. When she came out of the bathroom Wynn was coming up the stairs.

Wynn saw her outfit, "Nice dress! Are you almost done dominating Lindsay? Dinner is going to be soon."

Sara thanked her and replied, "Yes, wrapping up now." Wynn headed back to the kitchen while Sara went back into the room, "Okay, I am going to wipe off all the oil and cum from your pussy then release you. Wynn just came up and told me dinner is going to be soon. So, we are done for the night." Sara released the tethers and helped Lindsay up.

Lindsay removed her blindfold and kissed Sara before putting on her robe and heels then headed back to her room to change. Sara cleaned up the room then changed out of the dress and back into t-shirt along with a skirt keeping the fishnets and boots. The next day Andy and Lindsay opened their new store. They started out slow, but by the end of the day they had a few sales and people who were wanting to have their laptop repaired. By the end of the week they were swamped with repairs so much Andy called me in for backup during the next week. Over the course of the next couple weeks things settled down and Lindsay started spending about a quarter of the day at The Boutique Holstein with the other time at their store.

It was a Thursday in mid October and autumn was upon us in Tennessee, the leaves were changing color and it was getting chilly in the evenings. That afternoon Wynn came into my office and asked, "Shall I get the fireplace in the Great Room going? It is Yoga and meatloaf night."

I replied, "What an interesting combination; Who would have known your spicy meatloaf would be so popular! Good idea on the fireplace, should get the one in the sitting room going as well and I can leave my office doors open to get some heat in here."

Wynn got both fireplaces started and then took The Jeep to the neighborhood market to get the fixings for tonight's dinner. She returned an hour later and started the basic prep. She would wait until they were ready to start the yoga session before putting the meatloaf in the oven. Miranda would usually help out Wynn with the final preparations. While she was out Lulu called me to discuss transferring The ACME Deer Valley IT Services Agreement to Zac. I asked, "So who will be Zac's office manager with y'all going to Henderson?"

Lulu informed me, "I am staying here. Much like Zac and Aimee, I can't stand Vegas. Cristina will continue to manage Henderson."

I apologized, "Sorry, shouldn't have jumped to conclusions...just as I shouldn't have commented about you reminding me of Martina the first time we met in person."

Lulu laughed, "Apology accepted! Yeah, I made myself to look like a fool that day...it made Gary smile so that's a bonus."

I told her, "Yeah Gary can be a grumpy giant at times!"

Lulu continued, "Anyway, I'll likely get back to you after the holidays once Zac has a better idea he wants to do here. I am thinking we are going to be doing a refresh as well."

I was looking at their file, "You are about due. Windows 7 is reaching end of life so you should be migrating to Windows 10. It is a lot better than Windows 8, of course that wasn't even so bad once Microsoft released 8.1 version a year later after all the negative feedback with the Windows 8 user interface. We'll work something out, should be quiet come January."

Lindsay and Sara returned in Sara's Roadrunner and Lindsay saw the fireplace was in use, "Oh nice! Finally cool enough for us to use the fireplace." She saw Wynn and told her, "Andy is going to stay a little late tonight, but will be home by the time we are done with Yoga."

Since they were waiting Sara told Wynn, "I can assist you with moving the sofas while we wait for Miranda, Charlotte and Leslie."

Wynn and Sara moved the sofas while Lindsay moved the side tables then went into the entry closet to retrieve the mats. Lucy has been laying in her bed by the stairs when she heard someone coming into the mudroom. She started barking and pranced over to the door to greet Miranda, Charlotte and Leslie."

Miranda was the first to be greeted by Lucy, "There she is! Who's a good little puppy?!" They walked into the kitchen with Miranda carrying Lucy and noticed everything was already setup, "Hmm...are we late?"

Lindsay assured them, "No, Sara and I got home early so we got things setup."

Wynn put the meatloaf in the oven and told them, "Give me a couple minutes to change and put Lucy in my room. I'll be there shortly." After they finished their yoga session Leslie and Charlotte along with Sara and Lindsay went into the sitting room. Miranda helped Wynn with the final preparations of the dinner.

Leslie commented, "Love this sitting room. What did this used to be?"

Since I had my office doors open I heard her question and since I was nearly dinner time I came out to join them, "This used to be a giant tack room that they had added on. Victor and his crew converted into this arrangement with the guest bedrooms and bathroom then my office and this sitting room."

Lindsay added, "It was very different when Victoria first showed us the property."

Charlotte joked, "You should've seen our barn before Victor converted it into what it is now. I really like what he did in here, especially the trim detail around the cased opening. This is really simple, yet high end detail."

I explained, "Those are actually not so simple, those are solid timber beams he had found at another job which he hollowed out so they could wrap around the opening."

Charlotte commented, "That is something I really like about Victor, is his knack to make these little custom details out of nothing."

Miranda had finished the salad and Wynn was arranging the place settings. Wynn called out, "Lindsay you want to make a wine selection?"

Lindsay headed into the kitchen to see what we had in the wine fridge. Miranda informed Wynn, "The mashed potatoes are ready, shall I put them in a serving bowl?"

Wynn told her, "Yes go ahead. The meatloaf should be ready shortly. Lindsay when you are done selecting the wine let everyone know dinner is ready."

After dinner Charlotte and Leslie took care of the kitchen for Wynn while the rest of us gathered in the great room. We'd usually chat for an hour or two before everyone would leave. Later on Miranda told us, "Well, we best get going. I'll be back Sunday with Laura for our weekly meeting."

Chapter 28: Getting into a Groove and Christmas Time in Tennessee

We seemed to have a regular routine going now; Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday was just the five of us for dinner; Thursday was Yoga and meatloaf night with Miranda, Charlotte and Leslie; Friday was downtown family night so everyone worked an hour later with Wynn and I joining them for dinner in the downtown. They'd normally shutdown a portion of the street Laura's store was located for Food Trucks. Saturday we'd have Mother and Blanche with Laura and Sophie for dinner though occasionally we'd opt to meet at Mother and Blanche's

house. Sunday was The Boutique Holstein Meeting with Miranda and Laura staying for dinner.

The following Sunday the girls met for their meeting in the sitting room with the fireplace going. During the meeting Jodi noticed the fireplace in the background when Lindsay was on. She asked, "Is it cold out there?"

Lindsay replied, "For this time of year, yes. A cold storm came through and it was in the upper 30's last night. Might be in the 40's right now."

Jodi laughed, "We are finally getting below 100 out here!"

Miranda joked, "Just wait until end of November when it could get below zero at night!"

The following week Linda called me, "Hey Ron! A while back I discussed having y'all come out to the Oro Valley store for a project."

Unfortunately, I did recall that conversation but she had never elaborated as to what she wanted done, "You mentioned something about that a while back. What are you doing?"

Linda asked, "You remember that conference room we had?"

I was trying to recall as it had been over a year since I'd been down there, "Um...oh where you had the Wasp Corset vendor?"

Linda confirmed, "Yeah, forgot about that. So anyway I had Dundee convert that area into offices for Aubrey and Madam Kat. The old offices are going to be removed and that area is going to be a flex space. Mainly for local vendors to come for special visits. Dundee noticed there are some network outlets in those offices and we want to have those moved to the new offices."

I told her, "Okay, let me get your topology pulled up so I can see what we are dealing with." I found the Budget Holstein Oro Valley file folder and located their topology map, "Okay so outlets 12 and 24..weird have no idea why Laura did it that way...need to be relocated. Is that all you need?"

Linda told me, "Yes, it is. Is this doable?"

I told her, "Yes. But, you don't need all of us to make a special trip out there. Marty can easily handle this. He will remove the old cables and run new lines to the offices and install outlet boxes. Shouldn't take him more than an hour or two depending on attic accessibility."

Linda asked, "Who is Marty?"

I reminded her, "Marty McPi, he is our field technician who I normally contract for out-of-area jobs. He handles Jason in Frisco and a lot of our Vegas clients. I've worked with him for 20+ years. Let me look at his schedule and see when he will be in Arizona again. How far along are you on the project?"

Linda informed me, "The new offices are done. Dundee is just waiting on demoing the existing offices until Madam Kat and Aubrey can move over."

I was looking at Marty's schedule and saw he would be back in Arizona the first week of November, "Well, they could relocate at anytime. Their laptops will still work over WiFi even when docked. I am not certain how strong the WiFi is in that section since it was never being used. Though if it were a conference room there should be an access point or two in there."

Linda advised me, "There is box hanging from the ceiling in each room."

I advised her, "Oh okay, so you should have decent WiFi signal then. Marty can be out there the first week of November. Like I said their laptops will work over WiFi even when docked. Might not be the most optimal, but still works."

Linda asked, "So does Kacie pay him when he comes?"

I replied, "No, I'll send you an invoice once he closes out the work order with the parts he used and his time. Should I use Kacie's email for the work order?"

Linda replied, "May be Madam Kat as she is the store manager."

I confirmed, "Okay, Lynette Myers it is. She will be notified when he schedules himself to come out. As I said he is due back in Arizona the first week of November. I believe he is in Texas currently working on a project for Jason."

Linda was reluctant, but understood, "I rather y'all do it, but I understand that you are no longer in Arizona."

I reminded her, "We could do it, but that is going to be 'extra...'" and told her how much 'extra' it would be.

I submitted a detailed work order on Linda's behalf in Lynette's name. A couple weeks later the work order was completed by Marty who declared the project took 1.25 hours to complete and included the parts he used. Since I really didn't have anything to barter Linda for, I just billed her as I would a regular client. A couple days later Miss Kitty called me, "Hey Ron, I got the invoice and I am going to forward it over to Kacie. Everything is working great, I can't believe you were

able to convince Linda to have your field technician to do the work."

I told her, "Well, once I informed Linda of what Andy and I would have charged her to come out there and do it, she knew she would have to answer to Kacie about the extra expense."

Miss Kitty laughed, "That'll do it!"

Since we would be hosting Christmas dinner plus with Wynn and The McGrawl's having flown back to Arizona, Sara and I had Thanksgiving dinner at Mother and Blanche's with Laura and Sophie. During Thanksgiving dinner mother commented, "Wow, would have not thought we'd be having Thanksgiving dinner in Tennessee with the whole family here."

Blanche added, "Least we are getting use out of the dining room on a regular basis. Never used the one in the Tubac house much. Seems so empty though without the McGrawl's and Wynn here."

I told them, "Yeah, they have their adoptive family back in Arizona they wanted to spend the weekend with. Plus, we are going to be hosting Christmas dinner."

Lorena asked, "Who all is coming out?"

I told her, "Far as I know Marc and Martina along with Maya and Peaches. No Lizzie this time around as she is down in Tucson from October through March with her Mariachi band."

While the McGrawl's store would not reopen until the Monday after Thanksgiving with them being in Arizona, Laura was open the Friday after. That Friday I called Victoria, "Ron Merlot here...say, you wouldn't happen to know where I can get fresh cut Christmas Trees?" Victoria gave me the name and address of a couple tree farms outside of town. While I'd normally would start setting up on the Friday after Thanksgiving as it was usually a slow day for me, I opted to wait. I knew The McGrawl's and Wynn would want to be part of it. Plus, I would need Wynn's help to get the tree setup. In mean time, I bundled up and head out to the garage building. I fired up the heat pump and started to look around to see where all the Christmas stuff was. I saw my cows off to the corner along with the polar bear. I found several crates with Christmas Decor and at least a half dozen with Christmas Lights. I was not seeing my tree jig though and could have sworn I recall packing and unpacking it. I went downstairs into the main part of the garage and took a look under the stairs. I found my tree jig and Milwaukee electric chainsaw.

Sunday Miranda and Laura came over for the Boutique Holstein meeting. Sara joined them in the sitting room. Miranda asked, "When are they returning?"

Sara told her, "I believe later this afternoon. Wynn has an oversize lasagna which we will have tonight. She gave me cooking directions so it should be ready by the time they get back."

A little later in the afternoon the girls had wrapped up their meeting and had gone up to the play loft when I left for the airport. I meet The McGraw's and Wynn at the airport. Upon walking outside of the heated terminal Lindsay joked, "Is it too late for us to go back to Arizona for the next few months!"

I laughed, "But it is a *dry* cold....well may be not. There is suppose to be rain tonight with a chance of snow."

Lindsay complained, "Oh great snow!"

Wynn reminded her, "We'd get about as much snow here as we did in Arizona." We arrived back at the house and as soon as we walked into the mud room we could smell the lasagna. Wynn joked, "Wow Sara managed to not only get the lasagna in the oven, but didn't burn down the house in the process!" Lucy smelled Wynn and came running into the mudroom, "Lucy! You're still alive!"

Sara was in the kitchen and made her presence known, "Hey, I heard that! Have a little faith in me will ya!"

Lindsay came over and hugged Sara and told her, "Don't pay attention to her. I so missed you!"

Sara was flattered, but reminded Lindsay, "Thanks, but you were only gone a few days."

During dinner I informed everyone, "I going to start to get the house decorated for Christmas tomorrow. Victoria told me where there is a local tree farm, so Wynn and I will head there tomorrow. I checked up in the garage the other day and found where all the decorations and lights were. Also, found my tree jig."

Sara asked, "Are we going to hang stocking from the mantel?"

I told her, "You can, but we don't have any stockings."

Laura commented, "Sophie can make you some and even embroider them with y'all names. She does a quilting project on Sunday's. Earlier this month they started making stockings out of the quilts. I think they run about \$10 a piece with the money going to a local shelter. I suppose Sophie and I will do a little something in the house. We need to put our main attention on the store."

Miranda told her, "I can help you out with that. You have those giant store front windows."

Laura told he, "Yeah, put a tree up there and some our winter products."

The next day was back to the regular routine with Andy and Lindsay going to their store and Sara going over to my sister's store with Lindsay joining her in the afternoon. After lunch Wynn and I looked around the great room for a place to put the tree. We decided the corner by the entry would be a good place. There was a pony wall dividing the entry from the great room. We took the Jeep and headed to the tree farm. I was overwhelmed when we arrived as this farm was much larger than the one I had frequented in Carefree for many years. We had found a tree which would fit well in the Great Room and were heading to the front to pay for said tree when Wynn spotted a tall but skinny tree, "Hey Ron, how about we get this guy for the sitting room?"

I looked at the scrawny tree and agreed, "Sure, the girl's would like that!" Wynn grabbed the tree and added it to the wagon with the main tree.

As we were paying for the trees we were asked, "Do you need stands for these?"

I replied, "No, we have a stand already."

Wynn reminded me, "Not for the small one."

I told her, "Oh yeah, supposed we will need a stand for that one." When we got back to the house I told Wynn, "The tree jig is under the stairs in the garage. Going to need two pots of boiling water this time around."

Wynn looked at the smaller stand and told me, "More like a pot and half. I can get those going and put Lucy in my room then I'll help you out."

I had the tree jig setup when she had returned I told her, "Okay let's stand this up and put it in the jig." Wynn kicked off the temporary stand and helped me get the tree into the jig. She held it in place while I wrapped the bungee cord around the midsection of the tree. I stepped back and looked at the tree and asked her, "What do you think, one or two rows?"

Wynn stepped back at looked over the tree, "Well, about two inches goes into the stand and this one has a fairly long bottom. I would say one row."

I looked over the tree some more and agreed, "Yeah, that should be good. Can always remove another row if needed. We can't add one back so...what's the old saying 'measure once, cut twice'!"

Wynn laughed, "Yeah something like that!" I went to work removing the bottom row of branches. Wynn took another look and told me, "That looks good. One down, one to go!" We had already set the stands in the great room and sitting rooms so all we needed to do was bring the trees in and place them in the stands then add water. We brought the tree in through the mud room and entering the kitchen Wynn noticed, "Hmm...the water not boiling yet."

I told her, "We still have another tree to do, so no hurry."

We placed the first tree in the Great Room and went back out to work on the second tree. I put the scrawny tree in the jig and looked at it, "You know, I think this one is good as is. What da ya think?"

Wynn walked over and evaluated the situation, "I think it needs to gain a little weight. In all seriousness, it does look good. Let's get this one placed and hopefully by then the water will be ready." We came back into the house and could hear the pots boiling. Wynn went over to shut the burners off whilst I placed the 'scrawny tree' in its stand in the sitting room. Wynn carefully poured the boiling water into the first tree stand and then the half pot for the second tree. After she was done she told me, "I need to change and take a shower."

I noticed I too was covered in tree sap, "Yeah, same here. But, first I need to power wash the Jeep real quick to get the sap and road salt off." I only spent a few minutes power washing the Jeep before putting it into the garage. Once it was in the garage I went around and wiped off the excessive water. Afterwards, I headed upstairs and changed out of the sappy clothes and took a hot shower. I came back downstairs and headed into my office to take a look at my job queue.

Wynn came in and asked, "Did you want to do anymore today?"

I told her, "Not really, but I am sure the girls are going to want to decorate the house tonight and tomorrow. I suppose we should grab the crates of lights and foot switches, if we have more than one. For some reason I think we do...oh The Acme House we had a tree up in the play loft as well."

Wynn and I braved the cold and retrieved the crates of lights and also found two foot switches. We'd work on the outside tomorrow as it was getting late and everyone would be coming home soon for dinner. Sara and Lindsay arrived home. Lindsay saw the naked tree in the great room, "Oh you found a tree!"

I told her, "There is another one in the sitting room."

Sara looked at the tree in the great room and asked, "How the hell did you get another tree to fit in there?"

Wynn joked, "Very carefully!"

Sara went over to the sitting room and saw the 'scrawny tree'. "Oh, I see now. This works."

Lindsay came in too, "Ah, how cute! It's tall and slender like me!"

Sara asked, "Where are the lights?"

Wynn told them, "In the mudroom. I am surprised you two didn't trip over the crates on your way in."

Sara recalled, "Oh, okay...I did see those as we came in...didn't really pay attention to them."

I told them, "Wynn and I will do the outside tomorrow, if the weather permits. At least I know where all the decorations are. You two can work on doing the rest of the house over the next couple nights."

Lindsay asked, "Why do we only have..." she then recalled what happens on Thursdays, "...oh yeah Thursday is yoga night."

Wynn added, "And meatloaf night!"

After dinner the girls worked on getting the lights strung on the Great Room tree while Andy and I worked on the tree in the sitting room. Later that evening we had both trees lit and the next night the girls would add the decorations. Before I signed off for the evening I checked the weather and saw a storm was expected in the early afternoon tomorrow. I figured Wynn and I should have enough time to get everything setup outside and bring in the décor crates while taking out the empty light crates.

The next morning after breakfast Wynn and I went to work to getting my cows setup. She asked, "Any idea's where you are going to put these?"

I told her, "Wherever the extension cord will reach to. I will need to run another cord for the lights wrapped around the top of the split rail fence along the road. The photocell power spike has six outlets so we are good even with the lights along the porch. The porch is going to be awkward to setup the polar bear. Might end up putting him in the back by your room." Wynn and I got the cows placed along with their 'corral lights'. It took me three hours to get the lights along the entire length of the front fence which included along the driveway. Wynn had the lights done on the porch and had come over to help me. We took a break for lunch and could see the storm coming in. Fortunately, it only took us about 10-minutes to get the polar bear setup by the back porch. Just as we were bringing

out the empty light crates we could see the wind picking up and changing direction from the changes in the windmill we had at the fork of the two driveways. The 10-foot windmill which was illuminated at night had been a house warming present from Charlotte and Dave. We made it back inside when the rain started. Wynn got the fireplace in Great Room going while I started the one in the Sitting Room. After dinner the girls worked on getting the rest of the lower level of the house decorated.

Thursday night Miranda along with Leslie and Charlotte arrived for Thursday night yoga. Wynn opened the door and Miranda laughing asked, "What's with the cows?!"

Wynn explained, "Ron like cows and Laura got those for him when they split off after their father's death. They have a special meaning for him and has had them setup at every house we've been at since."

Miranda realized her error, "Ah, sorry didn't mean to come off as insensitive."

Wynn assured her, "Ron's in his office, so you are fine. Anyway come in out of the cold. You're early I hadn't had a chance to move the sofas yet."

Miranda told her, "I can help you." They walked into the Great Room and Miranda saw the tree, "Wow, nice tree! Neat decorations. Oh and the lights on the fence are a nice touch. Did Ron get together with the neighbors to do that?"

Wynn had no idea the neighbors had done the same, "Not that I am aware of. We had so many lights when Sara and Lindsay bought out the entire stock at the local Target a couple years ago when we were still at the house on Fairy Duster."

Miranda and Wynn moved the sofas and tables then setup the mats for their session. Wynn went and put the meatloaf in the oven and the girls did their yoga session. After they were done Leslie and Lindsay put up all the mats and move the sofas and tables back while Miranda helped Wynn with the final preparations for dinner. After dinner all of us hung out in the Great Room and chatted for a couple hours before Miranda, Leslie and Charlotte left. As they were leaving Miranda told everyone, "See you on Sunday."

Saturday afternoon Laura and Sophie along with Mother and Blanche arrived. Wynn answered the door and Laura commented, "I see Ron still has the cows I gave him many years ago!"

Wynn replied, "Yep. No matter which house we've been at he has always found a place for them."

Blanche asked, "I get the impression there is a special meaning behind them?"

Lorena attempted to explain, "I believe Abby got them for him after they went their own ways after my late husband died."

Laura explained, "It was kind of a joke, but Ron really appreciated the gesture. Like Wynn said he has made it a point no matter where he is to always find a place for them. I know it is kind of a strange and unusual family tradition, but we are a 'strange and unusual' family! Where is Ron anyway?"

Wynn told her, "He's helping Andy out at his store. Guess the repairs were piling up again. They'll be back for dinner."

They made their way into the Great Room and Lorena saw the tree and decorations, "Oh, wow! So festive in here!"

Sophie commented, "I will have the stockings tomorrow."

Laura added, "I can bring them into work on Monday and give them to Sara." She turned to Wynn, "So how long before dinner?"

Wynn laughed, "You tell me, it's your turn."

Laura had forgotten, "Oh fuck! Forgot about that."

Wynn assured her, "I have all the fixings, you just need to put them together. Though I do need to get some produce and take Lucy for a walk."

Laura replied, "Yeah, okay so we should have a couple hours before I need to get dinner prepared."

The four of them headed up to the play loft with Sara and Lindsay. Wynn took off in the Jeep with Lucy in a doggy sweater to the farmers market. Since it was all outdoors dogs were allowed and encouraged. Wynn returned an hour later with the produce. Lucy was following behind Wynn, she stopped off in the grass to relieve herself before coming inside with Wynn then heading to straight to her bed in kitchen. Sophie had come down to get a bottle of water and saw Wynn with all the produce, "Need help with them that?"

Wynn told her, "If you don't mind. Don't want to deprive you of playtime."

Sophie explained, "Nah, not much interested today." She noticed Lucy, "Wow, she looks exhausted."

Wynn laughed, "Yeah, we walked quite a bit at the Farmer's Market. Figured I get her worn out so she would sleep while we are getting dinner done. I didn't even

get a chance to remove her sweater before she went to the bed. Anyway, if you want to help out you can start washing vegetables."

Sophie was washing the vegetables for the salad when Laura came down into the kitchen she saw Sophie, "Wondered what had happened to you. Let me go wash and I'll start on plucking the chickens." Half hour later Laura had the enchiladas ready to go into the oven, "Okay 30-minutes in the oven and we should be good. How goes the rice and beans?"

Wynn advised her, "They'll just simmer until the enchiladas are done." Later on everyone else came down into the great room and chatted. Andy and I arrived back; with us coming into the mudroom awoke Lucy who started barking and made a beeline for the mudroom. Wynn laughed, "Andy and Ron must be back!"

I saw Lucy running towards us and picked her up before she had a chance to jump up on either of us, "You sure have a lot of energy!" We walked into the kitchen and I set Lucy on the ground and joked, "Does she ever sleep?"

Wynn told me, "Well, she had been asleep the last couple hours when we got back from the farmers market. Seems you two coming in woke her up, though she slept through everyone else coming down the stairs and chatting over in the great room. Anyway, dinner is going to be ready soon so you two should get cleaned up."

After dinner Laura helped Wynn getting the dishes before they headed out. Next Saturday's 'family dinner' would be at Mother and Blanche's. Sunday afternoon Laura and Miranda arrived for their meeting. Upon walking in the sitting room Miranda noticed the tree, "You have a tree in here? Don't recall seeing that on Thursday."

Laura added, "I was here yesterday and didn't see it either, but we were not over in here."

The following Monday when Sara and Lindsay came home Lindsay told us, "We have the stockings that Sophie made. Can we hang these after dinner?"

Wynn told them, "Sure, I have some Command Hooks that we can use to attach them to the mantel." After dinner Wynn, Sara and Lindsay hung the stockings. Later that week Marc called me, "So, I going to make this easier on you this time."

I asked him, "How so?"

Marc explained, "I know a guy out here who can provide us ground transportation from the airport. We all are going to fly in together."

I told him, "Well that does make things easier."

Marc added, "However, we all are not leaving at the same time. Maya and Ana will be leaving the day after Christmas..may be...Maya's not quite sure. Unless y'all object, we plan on staying through the weekend."

I replied, "I have no issues. I am sure Lindsay will be happy to spend some time with Martina. So when we should we expect y'all?"

Marc told me, "Early afternoon on the 23rd. Am going to need your address though." I told Marc I'd text him my address and Wynn or I should be here, but call ahead of time to be sure.

I headed to Great Room and found Sara, Lindsay and Wynn chatting. Wynn saw me and explained, "Just waiting on Andy then we can have dinner."

I told her, "Okay. Anyway, Marc called and they are all coming in together sometime in the 'early afternoon' on the 23rd. However, Maya and Peaches might only be here a couple days. Marc and Martina will stay through the weekend."

Lindsay was excited, "Cool. Get to spend some time with the Lady in Pink."

Sara added, "and our Lady in Red!"

Wynn asked, "So are they going to call before they leave so we know when to pick them up and is Peaches bringing Cream?"

I explained, "I assume she is since Martina is coming along with them. We don't need to pick them up, Marc 'knows a guy' out here who will take them from the airport to here. I told him to call us when they get into Nashville, just so someone is here when they arrive."

During the weeks leading up to Christmas, Wynn and I had been doing a lot of shopping and had gifts for most everyone. December 23rd had arrived and it was around lunch time when Wynn came in and asked, "Have you heard anything from Marc?"

I told her, "No, I haven't. Let me try to call him." Marc's phone went to voicemail so I decided to try Martina's and she answered, "Hey, where are all of you?"

Martina told me, "Still in Phoenix. Flight delayed due to maintenance issues. We should be boarding soon. We'll call you once we get on the road from the airport."

I replied, "Okay, that works." I headed back to the kitchen and told Wynn, "Their flight has been delayed. Martina says they should be boarding soon and they'll call us once they have left the Nashville airport."

Around five that evening Martina called me, "We just got everything loaded in the car and are getting ready to leave. See y'all in a couple hours we are going to stop and get some food first."

I asked her, "Did Peaches bring Cream?"

Martina replied, "Yes she did."

I replied, "That's fine. We just wanted to be sure. Tell your driver to come in on the drive then take the left fork. There is turn-around at the end by the side entrance." I glanced out the sitting room and saw everyone was in there. I headed out of my office and told them, "They just got in and are going to get some food first. So Martina said a couple hours. Also, Peaches did bring Cream."

Wynn asked, "So have Maya and Peaches over here then Marc and Martina upstairs?"

I told her, "Yeah, guess like last time...except no Lizzie this time around."

A couple hours later Marc and Martina along with Maya and Peaches with Cream arrived. Lucy started barking and made a dash to the mudroom as she could smell Cream. Wynn and I headed to the mudroom to greet them. Wynn picked up Lucy before I opened the door. Martina was the first in and commented, "Love the polar bear!"

I told her, "Yeah, we had him at the other houses but always in the front."

Maya added, "The lights on the fence are neat, especially seeing everyone on the block has done it."

Peaches walked in with Cream and saw Wynn holding Lucy, "So, that's why Cream is all excited."

Maya added, "That and she has slept most of the day with all the traveling we've done. Once we get settled in you should take her out one last time for the night."

Peaches complained, "So cold out there!"

Wynn joked, "I still warm tonight...only in the mid 20's at least it is above zero."

I added, "You should be used to it, being all that time you spent in Chugwater!"

Maya laughed, "Think her blood has thinned from being in Arizona for so long."

Marc added, "Y'all go from one extreme to the other."

Wynn showed Marc and Martina to their room while I took Maya and Peaches over to the guest rooms on the east side of the house. I asked, "Do y'all want to be in the same room as last time or take the other one?"

Maya asked, "Is there a difference?"

I told her, "Not really. Size wise they are the same and both have king beds, just different design theme." They decided they'd try the other room this time around.

They set their bags in the room and Peaches went to take Cream out for her final bathroom visit of the night. While she was out Maya asked, "Where are Sara and Lindsay?"

I told them, "I believe Andy and Lindsay already went to bed and think Sara is up taking a soak. They all work a half day tomorrow."

The next morning our guests slept in being they did arrive rather late last night and still trying to adjust to the two-hour time difference. Andy, Sara and Lindsay had already left for work by the time they started getting up. Peaches and Maya had come into the kitchen and Wynn started making breakfast for them. Shortly thereafter Marc and Martina came down the stairs into the kitchen and sat the other end of the table. Upon seeing Marc and Martina, Wynn cracked a few more eggs for the Spanish Omelet. After breakfast Maya, Peaches and Martina went up to the play loft. Marc asked, "So you guys have been out here what about six-months?"

I did the math in my head and replied, "Yeah. Sounds about right."

Wynn wrapped up getting the kitchen cleaned and told me, "I am going to head up to the play loft make sure those three aren't getting into too much trouble!"

Marc laughed, "Yeah Martina tends to get herself into a lot of trouble."

I joked, "Like when her and my sister were having an affair while I was away on business?"

To Be Continued...