

Eighteen

A half-hour later, Kathy woke up on the waterbed beside the fireplace. Jonathan was asleep on top of her.

She pushed him off. "I'm supposed to be staying at Gina's house tonight!"

"Was it as good for you as it was for me?" He mumbled.

"That's a line from a movie, stupid."

He pulled her naked body on top of him. "You're yummy."

"You're not bad yourself, but we've got to get going. It's one a.m.!"

Only a few embers glowed in the once-roaring fireplace. Goose bumps popped on his skin when he tossed off the heavy covers. "It's fucking cold!"

Kathy giggled. "That was the idea, right?" They laughed and kissed.

They put on clothes and winter coats and stepped out on the covered porch.

Snow mixed with sleet fell in the darkness as they ran for the car. He steered cautiously along the narrow, dirt road leading downhill from the lone cabin in the woods. Sleet pellets accumulated below the wipers, and naked tree trunks loomed in the headlights.

At the bottom of the hill, Jonathan stopped the car, touched Kathy's knee and traced his finger lightly up her inner thigh. "We were making love."

"No, silly boy." She kissed him. "We were fucking!"

They laughed again and she leaned on his shoulder as they drove through the frigid, night. "What are you feeling?" she asked, slipping her arm around his middle.

"I have this really powerful admiration for you. I mean, I liked you before, but now ... it was amazing to be with you. How do you feel?"

She smiled playfully. "Really warm inside. And good."

The snow and sleet turned to rain and the roads glistened in the headlights. Half an hour later they pulled up in front of Gina's house. "Kathy, how about an encore next weekend?"

"Good boy." She grinned. "You remembered my name."

"Of course."

"Just kidding." She squeezed his shoulder. "I can't. I'm going home to visit my loony parents."

"How about the weekend after that?"

“We’ll see. Call me.” She kissed his lips one last time, jumped out of the car and ran up the front steps.

He waved and then drove across town toward his dormitory, his lips still moist from her kiss. He was surprised that he had scored on only their second date, but mostly he was dazzled by the magic of the “first time.” Was he in love? He couldn’t tell, but it was so perfect.

Kathy went to college 150 miles south. They were both eighteen, living away from home for the first time. He was curious and horny with little experience. She was hot, horny, and more savvy than he.

Two weeks passed slowly for Jonathan. His mind was glued to Kathy and their evening together. The memory felt enchanted, almost like it didn’t happen. He left several messages on her phone, and he called Gina and left her a message too. Another week passed with no word and he grew more worried. *Has she had second thoughts about having sex with me? Has something gone screwy with her parents?* A sense of impending loss hung like a cloud over him and he felt like crying.

Another week passed then Jonathan called Kathy again on a Sunday afternoon and she answered.

“Kathy. Is everything okay? I’ve been calling you for a month!”

“Sorry.”

“That’s all you’ve got to say?”

“I’m really sorry.”

“Are you mad at me or something?”

“My period’s late.”

His ears turned hot and he swallowed hard. “How late?”

“Thirteen days.”

“That’s not much, is it?” Sweat rolled under his arms.

“For some girls, yeah, but I’m always twenty-eight days.”

“Ah, well. Wow ... that’s, ah ... not good.”

“Brilliant! That’s all you’ve got to say?”

“You’re on the pill, right?”

She started crying. “No.”

“How about we give it a week more and see what happens. If it turns out you’re pregnant, that means *we’re* pregnant.”

She sniffled. “That’s sweet of you to say, but it’s not that simple.”

“I know. But I want you to know I care.”

“I’m not ready to have a baby. I just want to have fun, you know?”

“Yeah. Me too.” He looked out the narrow dorm window at the darkening afternoon sky. In the grassy field between dormitories four guys were throwing a florescent orange frisbee. “I’m not ready to be a father.”

“And we barely know each other.” She laughed nervously. “Two dates. Maybe ten hours total we’ve been together. Not much to go on.”

“I’m a responsible kind of guy ... man.”

“I believe you. Gina’s told me about you.”

“What should we do?”

“I could ... get an abortion?”

“Doesn’t sound like you mean it.”

“My parents are Catholic to the bone. They’d never forgive me.”

He paused, thinking quickly. “Okay. Here’s an idea for now. I’ll borrow a car next weekend and come see you. I’ll call when I know what time I’ll be there. And you call me anytime if you want to talk ... need to talk. Okay?”

In the silence that followed, he heard her take a deep breath and let it out. “Okay. See you next weekend. Bye.”

Just before she clicked off, Jonathan heard her crying again.

He left the dorm and ambled across the almost-deserted campus with his hands in his pockets, thoughts swirling like fallen leaves in the wind. *We’re pregnant? Yes*, he thought. *Ready for parenthood? No*. The burden of responsible adulthood surrounded him like fog as the dwindling sunlight tinted the clouds on the horizon pink.

Monday and Tuesday seemed to take forever. On Wednesday when he got back to his room after classes, there was a voicemail on his cell. He tapped the screen and listened.

“Jonathan, it’s Kathy. I got my period. I feel so relieved.” A weight lifted from Jonathan during a short pause in the message. “I’m sorry ... but I don’t want you to call me again.”

Click.