

## **“The Beast In The Knight”**

### ***A Knight Rider/Ghost and Mrs Muir/Beauty and the Beast Story***

**By TunnelsOfTheSouth and JessicaLynne**

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Knight Rider and all its canon characters are the eternal property of Glen A. Larson and NBC Television Studios.

We have enjoyed ourselves hugely with this work.

We make no monies from this one or any of any of our TV series fanfics, only the joy and delight of creation.

*“Love all, trust a few,  
Do wrong to none: be able for thine enemy  
Rather in power than use; and keep thy friend  
Under thy own life's key: be check'd for silence,  
But never tax'd for speech...”*

***William Shakespeare***

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## **Chapter/Part 1**

“Michael, Devon is calling.”

“Thanks, KITT, patch me through. Yo, Devon!” The silver-haired Irish man on the screen smiled at Michael’s greeting.

“Michael, I’m glad I caught you at a good time. I have another mission for you. I just got off the phone with the District Attorney in New York City. There’s been a massive crime wave and corruption racking the city, possibly infiltrating the local law enforcement and the court system as well. No one knows who they can trust so they have asked for outside help. They were referred to FLAG by another outside source, a Ms. Carrie Ruvai from the FBI in Virginia. I told your contact, a Mr Joseph Maxwell, that I would send our best operatives, that being you and KITT. Can you help them with their investigation?”

“Yeah, I sure will. You and Bonnie will be following me in the Semi, I’m guessing?”

“Of course, Michael. I will have Bonnie upload the information we have to KITT’s data banks. We will meet you in New York in a few days. Mr Maxwell will be at the Criminal Justice Building in Manhattan.”

"Thanks, Devon. You heard him, KITT, plot us the fastest route to New York City!"

"Right away, Michael. You do realize that in all the years we have worked together I have never been further east of Los Angeles than Chicago? So, this will be an adventure for both of us!" KITT switched to Auto Cruise and the song "New York, New York" by Frank Sinatra began to play on the radio. Michael couldn't help but smile at KITT's excitement, he was like a child in a candy store when it came to new things.

After driving through the night, KITT and Michael arrived in New York City the next day. Driving across the Queensboro Bridge, the first sight of the city was truly amazing! KITT took a picture of it, the sun was already up as it was close to 8:30 am. No surprise in the city that never sleeps, there was a lot of traffic as people were on their way to work in the morning.

"I thought traffic in downtown LA was bad, but this tops it!" Michael said.

Finding a hotel with an attached restaurant was easy enough. After checking in at the Four Seasons, a hot shower and a hot breakfast in the restaurant, Michael and KITT made their way to the Criminal Justice Building. Michael took the elevator to the District Attorney's office. After letting the secretary know who he was and that Devon had sent him, he was shown to a conference room nearby. Michael waited for several minutes before the door opened and two people walked in. The man Michael assumed was Mr Maxwell. His colleague was a young woman, with a light sandy blonde bob that fell between her chin and her shoulders and sea-green eyes.

Michael discreetly sneaked a glance at her left hand and yep, there was a gold-braided band on the ring finger. Married. No chance. He respected that.

Mr Maxwell extended his hand. "Mr Knight? Joe Maxwell. Call me Joe. This is my deputy attorney, Catherine Chandler."

Catherine shook Michael's hand and said he could call her Cathy. "Nice to meet you both, call me Michael. Can you give me some idea of what is happening here? Devon Miles mentioned there's a crime wave and corruption. When did you first realize that things had gotten this bad?"

"In a city this size, it's ongoing. We actually had something similar happen in 89-90. Busted a massive crime ring, the leader was shot and killed by one of our detectives in our Special Crimes unit, the 210, lady by the name of Diana Bennett. He had kidnapped Cathy as well, but someone else found her and brought her home, apparently knew her doctor because the doctor confirmed she had been given what would have been a lethal dose of morphine. Doc gave her Narcan to counteract it."

"We think one of the ring leader's operatives might have returned to New York and picked up where he left off. There are a lot of similarities between then and now," Cathy continued.

"How can I help? You asked for outside help because you can't trust anyone. My partner and I are here, what can we do to help you out?"

"Speaking of which," Joe spoke up. "Where is your partner? I don't see anyone else here. Devon Miles said he was sending his two best operatives."

"Uh, he is waiting outside the building for us. Devon mentioned to you my partner is a sentient computer, an artificial intelligence in a car, didn't he?"

"No..."

All of a sudden, a voice came from Michael's wristwatch. "Michael is correct. I am the Knight Industries Two Thousand, you may call me KITT."

"Wow, I'd thought artificial intelligence was only in science fiction movies!" Joe exclaimed in shock.

"Look out your window. See the black T Top Trans Am? That's KITT. He's the most advanced car in the world, unique and one of a kind. My watch is a commlink that connects to him. I can talk to him from a long range away," Michael explained.

"My creator, my father, if I might be so bold, was Wilton Knight, the late founder of Knight Industries. He died soon after I was activated, the same day Michael and I met and he took me for a test drive. The Foundation for Law and Government, FLAG, is a subsidiary of Knight Industries. Wilton designed me, and the Knight Industries team built me to his specifications. The technician who programmed me and first brought me online, my mother, so to speak, is Dr Bonnie Barstow. You will meet her in a few days," KITT continued.

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## Chapter/Part 2

"I see you're all packed, then..." Captain Daniel Gregg walked into their room, looking past his wife to the neatly stacked pile of suitcases on their bed. "You're still determined to go. I don't like it."

"I didn't ask you to like it, dear." Carolyn turned to him. "Just to respect my decision. This is an intriguing opportunity for me. For us. To be taken up by Jenny Aaronson's publishing agency in New York is a way to open new markets for our historical novels. To find a younger following."

"But why do you actually have to *go* there?" her bearded husband grouched. "You've always managed by telephone or the internet up until now. You don't even have to leave this room now that all our books are being published on Amazon and can be downloaded straight to the readers' Kindles. It's not like the old days. More's the pity."

He shrugged. "You've always said how much you like the anonymity of it all. That you don't even have to leave this room or get out of your nightwear if you don't want to. Besides, we have enough people from all around the world buying our work. It's not like we need the money. He frowned. "And New York is a very dangerous place. It's full of ruffians, brigades as well as all manner of wharf rats and *ne'er-do-wells*."

"You've got me there," his wife replied honestly, wrapping a scarf around her neck before pulling on her gloves. "I doubt it's changed much in that respect since your sailing days. But this *is* the twenty-first century and I'll be safe enough in the better part of town."

She snapped the suitcases shut and locked them. "Jenny's sending a car to meet me at the airport, so I can't get lost. And I do have to leave this room sometime and freshen up our image. The walls are starting to close in."

"I cannot allow it." Daniel folded his arms across his chest. "You will be too far away from my protection."

"Then come with me..." Carolyn turned to extend one hand invitingly. "I know I've already asked you and I still don't see why you say you can't. You can if you really want to. We both know that. We proved it when we took all those trips up to Philadelphia to visit my parents while they were still alive. You enjoyed that time away."

Daniel sighed roughly. "That's as may be. But the last time I was in blasted New York City I swore I would never return! I was mightily wronged by the skullduggery of a cheating agent. We had a goodly set-to, his confounded ruffians against my motley crew."

His lips curved upwards as his eyes gleamed with the memory. "We won, of course. But that was also the year that..." He stopped, frowning. "The year that I..."

"The year that you died?" Carolyn supplied softly, coming forward to take his hand. "It wasn't your fault, my love. But it was nearly a hundred and forty years ago. That's a long time to carry a grudge against any city. I'm sure that cheating agent and his blasted ruffians are long dead. But you must tell me that story sometime. We may be able to use it in a future novel. We're always in need of good material."

She tangled her fingers through his, giving them a small, loving tug of persuasion. "I would like you to come with me. In fact, I would love it. You could show me the city you knew."

"With any luck, those rat-infested docks have been pulled down and buried by far beneath the city by now." Daniel shook his head. "The New York I knew was not for the ladies to see. Especially not my beloved wife."

"Then we can go there together and we'll make some new memories," Carolyn ignored his objection. "Jenny said she's reserved a hotel suite for me at the Four Seasons in Manhattan."

"Think of it. Summer in New York." Her lips curved in a sensual smile as she leaned closer to kiss his cheek. "Have you ever dreamed of making love with your wife on the 49<sup>th</sup> floor of a luxury New York hotel? Think of the view from up there."

"You, Madam, are incorrigible!" Daniel shook his head, even as his blue eyes darkened at the wanton idea. "I have never willing gone above the tenth floor of any building. It's not safe."

"But you do like the idea." Carolyn smiled. "We have nothing to lose. Candy and Jonathan now have lives and children of their own. Danny and Lucy are away, sailing around the world on that super yacht we bought in partnership with them. They won't be back in Schooner Bay this side of Christmas."

She looked around the large bedroom. "We rattle around in this big old house by ourselves unless some of our grandkids come to visit. I think we deserve some time for us. Just to be ourselves in a city where we aren't known and can walk down the street without being asked how we are, or what's happening? It would be a refreshing change."

Her husband regarded her levelly. "Your mind is already made up on this, isn't it?"

Carolyn caressed his cheek, looking deep into his eyes. "You will drive us to the airport and we will catch the flight to New York. You will be at my side as my husband and no one will look twice. Nobody will guess our secret. That you were born well over a hundred and eighty years ago. It will be a wonderful adventure."

"Flying..." Daniel opined darkly, his lips compressing. "There's another rub. I have never liked that fraught aspect of this new world of yours. If we could drive there, I would not hesitate. But to trust your safety to an enormous metal beast that should never even be able to lift from the ground let alone soar to thirty thousand feet. It's not natural. If God had meant men and women to fly like the birds—"

"Oh, please do stop being so nineteenth-century," Carolyn chastised him lightly, hearing his tacit agreement, even if he didn't say it in so many words. "Come on, I'll help you get packed. Before you find any more excuses not to go. I promise I'll hold your hand all the way there."

She sighed with happiness as she hurried to the wardrobe to drag out more suitcases before he got cold feet and changed his mind. She dumped them on the bed and opened them.

She looked up. "Tell me what do you think you'll need to take? I'll fetch everything for you."

Her husband shook his head and shrugged. "It's already done," he said with a wave of his hand. Neatly folded clothing and toiletries appeared within the open cases like magic. They snapped shut and the locks engaged. "But I still say I do not like this. Not one little bit."

Carolyn sighed as she looked down enviously. "It took me over half the morning to decide what to take and then pack it all. You really do have to show me how you do that."

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### Chapter/Part 3

Michael spent the rest of the morning with Joe and Cathy (with KITT joining in via commlink) hashing out ideas on how to start the investigation. When lunchtime came around, they all agreed to meet again the next day as both Joe and Cathy had court that afternoon.

After eating at a nearby deli (the Reuben sandwich on marble rye was fantastic) and topping off KITT's gas tank, Michael suggested to KITT that they do a bit of sightseeing and KITT could take some more pictures before going back to the Four Seasons.

"Yes, please, Michael! It will be a bit of down time before Devon and Bonnie get here. You need a break once in a while."

"Says the workaholic supercar," Michael joked, smiling.

The irony wasn't lost on him. A small burst of static came from KITT's voice modulator, his version of laughter.

Driving around the city, the duo saw a lot of sights, with KITT taking pictures along the way. They saw St Patrick's Cathedral, the Statue of Liberty, Times Square, drove through Greenwich Village and checked out the eclectic shops. Crossed the Brooklyn Bridge and visited the neighborhoods there, including Crown Heights and Williamsburg.

KITT admired the architecture of the buildings and took a picture of one of the local synagogues. Crossing back into Manhattan they stopped at the World Trade Center memorial. Michael quietly cried thinking of all the lives lost not even a decade ago on that horrible day in September. He silently said a prayer for the victims' families, that they would find continued comfort and peace.

As Michael and KITT drove back to their hotel they headed down Fifth Avenue and passed Central Park. It was nearly evening; they were both tired. KITT needed to recharge his power packs, after the long drive to New York from LA, as well as driving around the city all day. Michael decided he wanted to try authentic New York pizza for dinner that night.

Pulling into a parking garage across from a restaurant that sold pizza by the slice, Michael walked in, ordered, and enjoyed every bite of his huge pepperoni pizza slice. After dinner they drove back to the Four Seasons. Michael parked KITT in the hotel's underground parking garage, bid him good night and walked into the hotel. Changing into his usual pajamas, a T-shirt and boxer shorts, he climbed into bed and slept dreamlessly all night.

The next morning KITT woke Michael up using his commlink alarm. "Yeah, KITT, what is it, buddy?"

"Michael... Devon just called and told me the Semi is 150 miles from New York City. Go take your shower and get dressed, they'll be here soon. Devon wants to know how our meeting with Joe went yesterday."

"All right, thanks. Where Devon will find parking for the Semi in this place is anyone's guess."

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## Chapter/Part 4

Carolyn turned to her husband as the plane cruised in to land. Daniel had been silent, deeply frowning, for most of their trip south.

"Now that wasn't so bad, was it?" she asked him with a smile.

"Not as bad as I expected..." Daniel concentrated on peeling his gripping fingers, one at a time, from the arm rest, heaving a grateful sigh as the plane coasted to its final stop before the terminal.

Carolyn collected her things. "We'll meet Jenny's car, go to our hotel, and then telephone her to say we've arrived. We should take her out to dinner."

"Whatever you think is best." Daniel watched the flood of passengers who had leapt from their seats almost before the plane stopped, grabbing their things from the overheads while hustling their fellows to go faster. They jammed the aisle, all seeming to want to get off at once and pushing and shoving to achieve their aim.

"They're like rats deserting a sinking ship," Daniel observed grimly. "Do they all know something we don't?"

"It's how it is." Carolyn shrugged. "People always have somewhere more important to be. You'll get used to it."

"Not in this lifetime, nor any others," her husband replied caustically as he managed to get to his feet in the cramped space between the seats. "And on my ship at least we had room to move around. Elbow room, we called it."

"Come on..." Seeing a small gap, Carolyn quickly maneuvered him into the aisle, using his height and size to momentarily block the hectic flow of passengers.

There were grumbles and moans from behind them, but Daniel stood his ground, reaching to escort his lady before him.

"Bite me," he said to the burly man right behind him, using a phrase he'd learned from one of Candy's younger children.

"Oh, yeah..." The burly man bristled, trying to move forward.

Daniel stuck out his elbow and refused to be budged. He planted his feet firmly, settling his body to resist all comers.

"Come on..." Carolyn took her husband's arm and moved him in behind her as she walked down the plane. "We don't need to get into round two of the last fight you had in New York."

"If it must come to that, then so be it." Daniel escorted her off the plane with patent relief. "Both of your centuries are full of discourteous people. In my day it was always women and children first. The men were left to make the best of it they could." He glared behind him at the following passenger, still trying to get past him.

"Stow it, buddy!" The burly man pushed beyond them, striding away down the concourse.

"You, *Sirrah*, are *not* a gentleman!" Daniel shouted after him.

"Come on, Captain..." Carolyn slid her hand through the crook of his arm. "It's not worth it. Bullies like him are a dime a dozen in New York. You've been too long in the quiet of Schooner Bay."

"I suppose you have a valid point." Daniel nodded as they walked toward the rows of liveried men holding up cards advertising who they were there to pick up. "Sometimes I long for simpler times. I would never disrespect a lady."

"I long for them too at times." Carolyn hugged his arm as she saw the driver for them, holding up a card with their surname scrawled across it in large black letters. "Welcome back to New York, Captain Gregg. I hope this time will be better than the last."

"Bah!" Daniel pulled a face of disgust as they followed their driver to the limousine waiting outside the airport terminal.

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## Chapter/Part 5

After Michael had showered and dressed, he headed to the hotel front desk. The manager was very friendly. "Can I help you, Mr Knight?"

"Yes, my boss and our computer technician are on their way into New York, coming in from Los Angeles to meet me. They're driving a big black and gold semi-truck with our business logo on it, a knight chess piece. I am wondering if there's a back alley somewhere nearby where they can park the semi without getting in the way of other vehicles but is still close enough to conduct our business here? They'll be here soon, they're about 100 miles away right now."

"Let me think about it for a minute. Hmm... the loading dock where we get our supplies delivered is in the alleyway behind us. However, the wide alley between the hotel and our next-door neighbor might be the perfect place for your semi to park without interfering too much with our deliveries here."

"Great, thanks." Walking out to the parking garage Michael spotted KITT parked in the same spot where he had parked last night. "Morning partner. Thanks for waking me up. Did you hear my conversation with the hotel manager?"

"Good morning, Michael. Yes, I heard you and have already sent Devon the parking information."

"Thanks pal. Do you have an ETA for them? I'm hungry and I am thinking both Bonnie and Devon will want breakfast when they get here. We'll eat in the hotel restaurant before we all go to meet Joe and Cathy at the DA's office."

"They should be here within the hour. There's a small grocery store a block away. They might have some coffee you can brew in the coffee pot in your room to tide you over until then. It will give you a chance to get out and walk a bit."

"Always the mother hen. Thanks, KITT."

Walking up and down the grocery store aisles Michael found some instant espresso coffee, as well as some Irish breakfast tea for Devon. He decided to use the coffee maker to heat water for both. Grabbing a small container of vanilla creamer and a box of sugar packets for Bonnie, he put them in his basket, then headed to the bakery area and found some pastries to eat with his coffee until they all could have something more substantial in the hotel restaurant. He paid for his purchases and made it back to his hotel room about 10 minutes before the Semi pulled up. KITT notified Michael of Devon and Bonnie's arrival, and Michael met them both in the lobby before taking them up to his room and updating them on yesterday's meeting with Joe and Cathy. After breakfast they all climbed into KITT's cabin and headed to the DA's office.

Introductions were made, and they got to work. Bonnie asked for permission to log into the DA computer networks so she could do research from her end of things, looking up information on

the internet. Limited permissions were granted for all of them, including KITT. The only exception was for confidential cases that were still open and ongoing. Bonnie then looked up the 1989-1990 crime wave that included information on Cathy's kidnapping and the subsequent search, and both Joe's reports and Diana Bennett's. There was also a toxicology report from a Dr Peter Alcott, detailing the Narcan treatment he had given Cathy for the morphine injection that had nearly killed her.

"Unfortunately, Dr Alcott passed away last year, so you won't get much help from him," Joe said.

"Dr Alcott was going to be my starting point in this investigation," said Michael. "What about Detective Bennett? She killed the ring leader in 90, have you asked her about her thoughts on this whole thing?"

"Detective Bennett works on only one case at a time. She's one who likes to stay below the radar, so to speak. Hates publicity, and doesn't like the attention. But she's extremely good at what she does. To answer your question, no, we haven't had any chance to talk to her yet. It would be interesting to hear what she has to say about it, given what happened back then."

"Then Detective Bennett is my starting point. You have the number to the 210? I need to get in touch with her watch commander."

"Why am I feeling this sense of *deja vu* all of a sudden?" The wisecrack from Joe had everyone grimacing. "All right, let's go to work! We're burning daylight."

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## Chapter/Part 6

Daniel didn't try to argue with the bellboy who insisted on removing their luggage from the trunk of the limo without any help. The young man loaded the cases onto a fancy golden trolley cage and expertly maneuvered it into the foyer and led the way up to the reception desk.

"Mr and Mrs Captain Daniel Gregg," Daniel told the cheerful female receptionist who greeted them. "We have a reservation."

"Ah, yes..." The young woman ran her brightly-painted fingertip down the computer screen. "You're the very special guests of Ms. Aaronson. She's booked you one of our best suites on the 49<sup>th</sup> floor. It's all been prepared." She looked up and flashed a wide smile of perfect white teeth. "I'm sure you'll find everything to your satisfaction. Welcome to New York. We do hope you'll enjoy your stay."

Daniel frowned at her. "You don't have anything lower?"

The receptionist's bright smile faded slightly but she managed to hang on to it. "Lower?" She looked confused.

"Please ignore my husband," Carolyn intervened smoothly, taking Daniel's arm. "He just isn't used to such heights. We're from Maine. We're very happy with what's been booked for us. I'm sure it'll be fine."

Daniel frowned at her but he didn't comment further. He picked up the pen and signed the register with a flourish.

"Excellent." The receptionist's full-wattage smile returned. "Then the bellboy will show you the way. Be sure to have yourselves a nice day." The woman waved quickly to the young man with the trolley. Instructions were given and then she stepped back, to survey the foyer for any new customers, considering her work was done.



"Come on, Captain Bligh..." Carolyn slipped her hand into the crook of her husband's elbow. "Let's go on up and see what's to be seen. You might enjoy it."

"That's the bit that worries me," Daniel complained. "I'd still rather sail single-handed through the eye of a hurricane."

As they turned away from the desk, three people walked into the foyer. They were all talking together animatedly. But as they crossed toward the bank of elevators, one of the two men stopped and turned to look back.

"Excuse me..." He approached Daniel, studying him closely. "I don't wish to interrupt your vacation, but don't I know you? Your face looks so familiar."

He was as tall as Daniel and as powerfully-built. His hair was silver grey and his blue eyes held a querying frown. His accent was clear and clipped, obviously English. He held out one hand, seeming to expect Daniel to shake with him.

"Devon Miles. I swear I'm not imagining it. I do know your face. I never forget anyone I've seen before."

His brows rose with inquiry, looking for answers as the two men shook hands. Drawn across the carpet, his two companions joined him.

"I don't believe we have ever met before," Daniel replied. He glanced at Carolyn. "Maybe I have one of those faces. There must be a million like mine in this city."

"No, that's not it." Devon shook his head. "Give me a second. It'll come to me. I have a very good memory."

The young woman was studying Carolyn. "You know, now that Devon's mentioned it, I'm sure I've seen your face before somewhere too. This is uncanny." She held out her hand to Carolyn. "Bonnie Barstow." She brought the other man forward with a hand on his arm. "And this is Michael Knight. We're in town on business."

"I don't think we've ever met." Carolyn shook her head as she made the introductions. "I'm Carolyn Muir and this is my husband, Captain Daniel Gregg. We're here to see my new publisher."

"Gregg... that was the name," Devon Miles replied, stroking his chin with thoughtful fingers. "I'm so sure I know it from somewhere."

"Carolyn Gregg, of course!" Bonnie exclaimed. "You're that famous writer from somewhere down in Maine. I've seen your books and even read a few. They're very good. Very atmospheric." She laughed. "It's such a small world. We're just in from LA."

"I seem to be the only one who doesn't know anybody here," Michael complained good-naturedly. "Say, would you two like to join us for dinner this evening? Since we all seem to know each other in some way and we're strangers in town too. I hear this place cooks a mean steak. It's been a long day and I'm starving."

"I would like that very much," Carolyn allowed slowly. "It's always nice to meet people who enjoy our books."

"Oh, do you write them together then?" Bonnie looked from one to the other with deep interest. "How fascinating. You must have such fun."

"Oh, you have no idea," Carolyn laughed, ignoring her husband's slight tug on her arm, trying to draw her away.

"Schooner Bay..." Devon waved a finger. "In Maine. That's it! When I was travelling up through New England years ago, looking for a house to buy. I stopped there for a night or two."

He turned back to Daniel with a long considering look. "There was something in the town's newspaper I saw there, all those years ago. Something about a man called Captain Gregg and he died an accidental death almost a hundred years before the article. It intrigued me because it was such a banner headline. As if someone was trying to make a point or print a retraction for a past wrong."

He looked Daniel over. "I hope you don't mind me saying, but if someone put a sea cap on you, Sir, you could have been the old boy's twin." He smiled. "Of course, that Captain Gregg died over a hundred years ago. So that's impossible. It's still uncanny."

"He was a distant ancestor," Daniel replied smoothly, keeping his expression neutral. "And it was a very long time ago. But I have been mistaken for him before." He smiled. "Quite impossible, of course."

He tightened his hold on Carolyn's arm. "Now if you will all please excuse us. We were about to go up to our suite and freshen up. We'll see you for dinner. We'll look forward to it."

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"Do you really want to have dinner with those people?" Daniel asked as he stood in the middle of their 49th-floor Four Seasons suite. "That Devon sees and knows too much." He was not about to approach the floor-to-ceiling windows that offered an incredible view out over the city.

Carolyn shook her head at him. "I think we will. Where's the problem? I liked them. They all seemed very honest and direct, not looking to make mischief or do us any harm. We came to New York to see the sights and meet new people."

"If you say so." Her husband frowned at her. She was standing right in front of the windows, looking down at the view of the cityscape. "Don't stand so close," he commanded.

"Why not?" His wife turned to smile at him. "It's an amazing view. Haven't you ever been up to the very top of the mast of your ship? What was that view like?"

"Of course, I have!" Daniel scowled at her. "But that was not for pleasure and no ship I have ever commanded has been as tall as this." He waved a hand at the windows. "Please come away from there, my dear. It's not safe."

"Very well..." Carolyn walked toward him, smiling. "We have a couple of hours before we need to go down for dinner. Do you have anything in mind of what you'd like to do until then?" She lowered her lashes, peering at him through them. "I did ask you before we left if you'd ever dreamed of making love with your wife on the 49<sup>th</sup> floor of a luxury New York hotel. Have you given the idea any further thought?"

"Madam..." Daniel said warningly, even as he smiled at her naughtiness. "*My soul will always find yours...*" he quoted softly as he took her in his arms and kissed her as if he never wanted to ever let her go.

He was very glad the huge, deeply inviting bed was on the other side of the room from the view he never intended to look out at. They fell together into that wide softness and there was no longer any need for words.

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## Chapter/Part 7

After the long flight and their romantic afternoon, Carolyn and Daniel were both tired. Carolyn set an alarm on her cell phone, then laid back down and fell asleep with her husband's arms wrapped around her. Daniel kissed Carolyn tenderly on her shoulder before he, too fell asleep. Several hours later, their alarm went off. They both showered (separately, to prevent a repeat of earlier events and wind up missing dinner altogether), dressed, and met their new acquaintances at the restaurant. Devon and Michael both stood up as they walked in.

"Thank you again for inviting us for dinner," Carolyn said as Daniel pulled out her chair for her before taking his own seat. "Yes, thank you," Daniel concurred. "It's been an extremely long time since I was last in New York City. I didn't get a good look from our window; our hotel room is much higher up than I am comfortable with. Even so, I can see a lot has changed about the city. The population wasn't anywhere close to the masses we saw on our way here this afternoon."

"It's definitely a big change from small town Maine, that's for sure," Carolyn chimed in. "In Schooner Bay everyone knows everyone else."

Just then, the waiter showed up to take everyone's orders for dinner. Michael ordered the New York strip steak, medium well, with a baked potato, with a glass of draft beer to drink. Bonnie ordered the chicken scampi and spaghetti with Chardonnay as her drink. Devon ordered the bacon wrapped filet mignon, medium with hasselback potatoes, with a glass of Merlot. Daniel ordered the same, and was surprised to see vintage Madeira on the menu, so he had Madeira as his drink. Carolyn decided on the flounder with rice pilaf and steamed vegetables, and a glass of the Madeira as well. When the menus were cleared out of the way, the conversation picked back up.

"So, Mrs Gregg," Bonnie began.

"Carolyn, please."

"Okay, Carolyn. Who is your publisher? You said you were meeting with a new one?"

"Her name is Jenny Aaronson, with Nolan Publishing. We had been publishing our books through Amazon for quite a while. Jenny wanted to meet with us in person to discuss some new ideas for story lines for our series. We're meeting with her tomorrow morning."

"How do you come up with your story ideas? Your work makes me feel like I'm actually there during the mid-1800's!" Bonnie smiled. "I'm a computer technician, so I read your work as a way to get away from the computer books. They're a major escape for me."

Daniel spoke up to answer. "A lot of our stories are based on the adventures my ancestor, the first Captain Gregg, had when he was alive. Mr Miles —"

"Devon."

"Devon, I do apologize for being rude earlier. My resemblance to my ancestor is very uncanny. We have a painting of him on our fireplace mantle at home. Probably the same one you saw in our newspaper that day. I'm glad the matter of his untimely and accidental passing was finally put to rest, so to speak."

Michael cracked a grin at the unexpected word play. Meanwhile the commlink was buzzing insistently on his wrist. Michael pressed the button on the side to silence it, sending KITT the message he would answer later, now wasn't the right time

Their dinner arrived right then. The food was fantastic, the wine and beer made everyone's taste buds dance. Dessert was ultimately declined; everyone was too full. While everyone ate, the conversation continued.

"Whereabouts in England are you from, if I may be so bold, Devon?" Daniel asked.

"I'm not English, I'm from Ireland. County Cork. I spent a good portion of my youth in London, and served with the British OSS during World War II, as Ireland had declared themselves as neutral during that time."

"Interesting. While I am the only son of an only son, born in Schooner Bay, I also have extended family in Cork City. I'm second generation American, my parents retained their Irish accents their whole lives after emigrating here to the United States. I picked up their speech patterns and accents myself."

"That's very interesting indeed. Many American children lose their parents' accents as they grow up here, going to school and being around other children. How did you retain it?"

"That explanation is simple. I was home-schooled. Most of my education was taught by my own parents."

"Because of that," Carolyn continued, "Daniel has very old-fashioned values."

"I see, that makes sense. And what about you, Carolyn? How did you meet Daniel?"

Daniel and Carolyn looked at each other. Carolyn smiled at the memory. "I was a widow back then. My first husband had just passed away. I moved from Philadelphia with my two children and our housekeeper to Maine. Too many memories, it was time for a change of scenery. I leased the house that became our home from the first Captain's great nephew. Soon afterwards I met Daniel. Things were rocky at first, I wanted to move back home soon afterwards. But something pulled me back. Over time we fell in love, and married a few years later. Eventually, I bought the house."

"Wow, that's an amazing love story!" Bonnie smiled. "It sounds like it could be a novel in itself!"

"Thank you." Daniel said. "Enough about us, tell us about yourselves. You said you were in New York on business from Los Angeles? That's a very long way to travel just for business. What brings you to New York?"

"We're investigators who work for a privately owned foundation and work with local law enforcement. My partner couldn't join us tonight, but he and I are the field agents. Bonnie does research and is the mechanic and technician for our main vehicle. Devon handles the diplomatic side of things." Michael answered.

"Yes. I would very highly suggest you be on your guard while you're visiting New York. There's a massive crime ring and corruption happening here in the city right now. Law enforcement didn't know who to trust. It's happened before. Apparently, the big lesson learned was to ask for outside help. We were referred by an agent at the FBI." Devon explained.

"These people think they are above the law, so it's our job to bring them back to earth," Michael said.

Daniel looked at Carolyn and dryly remarked, "Some things never change, it seems."

After dinner everyone went into the hotel lobby. Going to their rooms, they bid each other good night."

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## Chapter/Part 8

The next morning, Michael asked KITT to patch him through to Diana Bennett's watch commander at the 210. As soon as they were connected, he requested the man's permission to speak to the reclusive detective. After a long thoughtful pause, this was granted, but with strict conditions. They irked Michael, but he agreed, needing access to the woman. The watch commander said he would clear the path and gave a private address downtown.

"I'm not asking for his permission to marry her," Michael complained as he ended the call. "I just want information." But he was intrigued by the need for such security.

"Diana Bennett is an excellent investigator," KITT chimed in. "I've looked her up. She's very well thought of among her colleagues and peers. She has put away several high-profile offenders. You could say she is very much like you. You would do well to be on your best behavior."

"Thanks, pal," Michael grimaced. "I'll try not to upset the woman by jumping on her furniture or messing up the rug."

Michael drove to meet Diana at her loft apartment, as specified by her commander. He was very keen to get the woman's perspective on the current events. He took the elevator to the top floor of the building, tapping his fingers impatiently against his thigh as he watched the illuminated number count upwards. He remembered Daniel Gregg's assertion from the previous evening about not liking heights. It was an odd thing for a man to say.

"Michael..." KITT said warningly through the commlink, sensing his impatience.

"Yeah, yeah, I know. Play nice," Michael replied as the elevator stopped and the doors opened.

A woman was waiting for him in the tiny lobby outside the elevator. "Does that mean I have to do the same?" she asked, looking him over with clinical precision. "And do you often talk to yourself?" Her lips quirked wryly.

"It's the only way I can get a decent answer." Michael shrugged, holding out one hand toward her. "I'm Michael Knight from FLAG in LA. Your watch commander gave me this address."

He noted the bulge of a gun holster beneath the line of her jacket. She had one hand placed near that, as if she was always expecting trouble. He could respect that level of preparedness.

"Hello, Mr Knight from FLAG in LA..." The palm of her free hand was cool and dry next to his and her grip firm but fleeting. "Diana Bennett from New York." Again, her lips moved with self-deprecating humor. "My commander has said I must play nice with you too. I suppose I can try. Come on in."

Diana dropped her hand away from her gun as she stood aside to indicate the way to the open door of her apartment before she went in ahead of him. She shut and locked the door behind them, doubled checking everything.

"Security," she replied to Michael's frown. "You never know who wants to hurt you out there." She pointed around the room. "In here, I have hidden cameras, sensors, alarms, fog cannons and everything needed to get one up on the bad guy if he gets this far. He would be sorry if he did." She patted the bulge beneath her jacket.

The commlink watch on Michael's wrist began to buzz insistently. He pressed the button to cut the connection, not needing the distraction right then. He knew KITT had heard everything and wanted to express his approval at Diana's state of preparedness.

"I should introduce you to my boss, Devon. He likes to be sure everything is done right and proper. No stone unturned. No bad guy left unpunished."

"I like the man already," Diana replied coolly. "Coffee? Or is this strictly business?"

"Business, I'm afraid..." Michael had already noted her large whiteboard set up in a corner of the room. He walked over to it to get a better look. He held his wrist up for KITT to see what it held through the commlink.

"You're working on that same case we were brought to New York to investigate." Michael studied the board, impressed with the details and the conclusions Diana had already drawn. They were very thorough and gave him new leads he had not yet considered.

"This is how I like to work." Diana joined him, studying the board with pride. "I don't use computers that can be hacked or stolen. Carrying all of this out of here would take some time and effort. Make a bit of noise too."

Her blue eyes turned Michael, noting his use of the commlink. "And if you're here, all the way from LA, then the corruption goes very deep. I've suspected as much."

She nodded toward the commlink which was still flashing red even if it had been silenced. "And your partner? Where is he or she? They seem very keen to get in touch."

"Downstairs," Michael replied shortly, turning his attention back to the board. "Keeping watch in case any of those bad guys of yours show up."

Diana smiled, this time with genuine amusement. "I like you, Michael Knight from FLAG in LA. I think we can do some serious damage to the bad guys if we worked together."

She waved one hand toward the loft window. "Do you want to bring your partner up? Three minds are better than two. We can go over my conclusions."

Michael shrugged. "Ah, I'm afraid Kitt wouldn't fit in the elevator. He's kind of large."

Diana's blue eyes opened wide with curiosity. "How large? That old thing used to carry freight cargo when this place was a warehouse."

"Why don't you come downstairs with me and I'll introduce you to him. You'll have to meet him sooner or later. I think we need to make plans to bring you onto our team. Joe Maxwell will approve, given your thoroughness with all of this." He looked back to the board.

"Joe Maxwell?" Diana's brows rose. "You know Joe? Well, why didn't you say so? Him and me, we go way back. Let's go and see him."

She turned to grab up a set of keys from a nearby table and pressed a hidden button which opened a secret drawer in the base of the top. She picked up a cell phone from inside and shut the drawer again with a push of her hip.

She held the phone up. "I have everything I need on this."

"I thought you said you didn't trust devices."

"I don't leave them lying around to be found. And there's no internet link on it." Diana shook her head. "That board serves as a very good distraction. People are used to seeing me work in the old-fashioned way. Keeps them guessing. But this is the twenty-first century. In case you haven't noticed."

"Oh, I've noticed all right..." Michael grumbled as he followed her to the door and waited while the detective locked and triple checked her security. "Like I need two Kitts in my life." He shook his head as they took the elevator back to the ground floor and walked together out into the street.

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## Chapter/Part 9

Walking out of the building, Diana looked around. "So, where's your partner, Kitt? I don't see anyone standing around."

Michael walked over to his car, a black 1982 Trans Am that was obviously very well taken care of. For a vintage car it looked brand new!

"Hop in, he's waiting for us."

Getting in the car, Diana looked at the futuristic sci fi dash, but there was no one waiting in the back seat.

"All right, what's going on here?" Diana asked. "There's no one else in this car."

"You'd be surprised," Michael answered. "Kitt, how about you introduce yourself?"

"Good morning, Detective Bennett."

"Wait, your car talks?"

"Yes, I do. I'm the voice of the Knight Industries Two Thousand microprocessor. My friends and family call me KITT. You are welcome to do so as well."

"Okay, then. I have seen some unusual things in my life, but nothing like this. It's nice to meet you too, KITT. And you can call me Diana."

"Thank you, Diana. I have to say, I am very impressed with the work you have done so far on this case. I saw everything through Michael's wristwatch, his commlink. It has a camera on it. I hope you don't mind but I took pictures of everything you have done so far and sent them ahead to the DA's office so Joe Maxwell can look at it while we're on our way back there."

"Thank you. That's going to save a lot of time. I guess there are benefits to modern technology. I'm just used to being cautious, I don't want my work to get into the wrong hands. I'm presuming those files were encrypted for security, right?"

"Of course."

Arriving at the Criminal Justice Building, Michael and Diana took the elevator up. Joe and Cathy met them in the conference room.

"Joe, it's been a very long time. Hello, Catherine, it's good to see you as well." Spotting Cathy's wedding ring, Diana quirked an eyebrow. "How are your husband and your son these days?"

Cathy's eyebrows shot up. "They're fine, thank you. I'll pass on your regards."

Joe looked at Cathy in shock. "You're married?! When did this happen and why wasn't I invited?"

"It's a long story Joe, and there's a big connection to the case in it. Let's start by me saying I'm glad to finally tell my side of what happened in 1990. Do you remember me telling you about a very special friend of mine, and you have a heart like his?"

"Yes, somewhat."

"He had been very sick then. I had taken time off work to take care of him. It was during that time our son was conceived. I was on my way to tell him when I was kidnapped. I had just given birth and been injected with the morphine when Vincent found me. I told him about our son before I fell unconscious. Vincent took me home. He was the one who called Peter Alcott to come over. While I recovered at Vincent's home, he searched for our son, along with Diana."

Jacob, our son, is now 19. Vincent and I married after I fully recovered. My married name is Catherine Chandler Wells.”

“Vincent... that explains a lot. I remember we found some things in your apartment that had his name on it. For a long time, he was our prime suspect in your disappearance, until Diana discovered it was Gabriel who kidnapped you.”

“Vincent was the one who told her. One of Gabriel’s henchmen tried to kill him. Vincent got him first, self-defense. The henchman left the ring behind that Diana gave to you. Vincent gave the ring to Diana, along with our trust in her.”

Michael then spoke up. “I’m sorry, just to clarify here, Gabriel was the ring leader that Diana killed, right?”

“Yes.” Cathy said. “Vincent turned himself in to Gabriel and was Gabriel’s prisoner for a time. He escaped with Jacob before Diana killed Gabriel.”

“That explains the crib we found in Gabriel’s mansion, but no baby in it.” Joe said, connecting the dots. “19, wow. Time flies.”

“Maybe one day you’ll get to meet them.”

“Okay, this feels like old home week with all of the reminiscing. Let’s get back to current events.” Diana said. “I have met KITT. He sent encrypted files of my work so far on this case to you. I have more on this phone that I can add as well. I want to know what you think so far, Joe.”

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After their meeting with Jenny Aaronson, which had gone very well, Daniel and Carolyn were enjoying a late afternoon, early evening walk through Central Park. The weather was beautiful, the trees were full and green.

They passed a culvert opening to what looked like a tunnel. While they decided to not explore, Daniel was feeling something very unusual as they walked past the tunnel opening. Little did they know, there was a very unique man in the tunnel, waiting for his wife to come home.

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## Chapter/Part 10

Standing silently in the shelter of the steel door rolled back, Vincent sensed Daniel passing above him. His brows knitted together as he tracked the unusual couple as they walked on through the gathering darkness.

He took a step forward, thinking of following them, given the park was no place for a couple alone at this time of the day. Not when other, more savvy city dwellers had left the park to the denizens that made it their home. But then he realized that the man escorting the woman had unusual powers he had not felt before.

“Almost otherworldly...” Vincent mused, walking further forward to peer down the tunnel toward the entrance. “Like he’s lived before and is now born again, in a way.” He shook his head. That made no sense, but he knew there were things in heaven and earth that were still mysteries. He returned to his vigil, waiting for his wife to come home.

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“Let’s go on into the park,” Michael said. “It’s a fine night for a drive.”

“You’re in a good mood,” KITT commented as he did as commanded, taking the West 59<sup>th</sup> Street entrance.



"We're getting closer to the truth," Michael replied, looking all around as they drove deeper into the park. "This is a great place."

Of course, he's seen huge spaces like this before, back in LA. But there was something special about this place. A sense of otherworldliness that the parks back in California didn't have.

"Tradition," KITT replied to his comment. "The New Yorkers know what they have here. They'll never make it into a carpark."

Suddenly the car's sensors started going haywire. KITT scanned quickly, seeking the source of the interruption to his circuits. He found there were two entities within reach. One above ground and one below."

"Michael..." he said warningly, even as he stopped. "This is all very strange."

"I'll get out and have a look..." Michael got out to see what was going on.

In the distance, he saw Catherine Wells walking through the park, looking as if she had somewhere else, she needed to be.

"What gives?" Michael looked after her, not liking the idea of a woman alone at this time of night.

Shaking his head, he got back into the car. "Follow her," he commanded.

It didn't take long for them to catch up with Catherine. She turned as she heard the vehicle behind her, ready with an excuse on her lips, until she saw who it was following her.

"Good evening," she said quickly. "What are you doing here?"

"I could ask you the same..." Michael got out of the car.

"I'm going home," she told him with a dismissive frown. "I don't need company."

"Well, I'm too much of a gentleman to allow you to walk on alone," Michael replied, folding his arms across his chest. "So, either you tell me the truth or I will walk with you to make sure you get there safely."

"Has anyone told you, you can be very annoying?" Catherine grimaced.

"Lots of people..." Michael leaned back against KITT's hood. "And all the time."

"Well, since you are here..." Catherine sighed. "You might as well walk all the way with me and meet my husband. You see, I am not unprotected in the park. Only a fool would walk abroad at night around here."

At that very moment, two people walked up out of the darkness. Both looked surprised at the small gathering standing next to the car.

"Good evening," Daniel said formally, touching two fingers to the brim of his cap. "We didn't expect to meet anyone we knew."

"Good evening." Michael's lips quirked with amusement. "We seem to be getting up quite a little party." He glanced at Catherine. "Any chance there's room for two more?"

"I guess so." Catherine's bond with Vincent hummed with awareness. She used it to warn him before bringing some unexpected guests into the tunnel. "Follow me. It's this way."

As they walked, Carolyn happened to mention that she was being published through Jenny Aaronson, Catherine's best friend. This pleased Catherine very much as they reached the tunnel entrance and walked down.

"This is where you live?" Michael asked, looking around at the two other tunnels. "Curious real estate."

"It's below here," Catherine told him as the steel door rolled back again and a tall man stood in shadow on the other side.

"You are well, my love?" he asked, in a low tone that grabbed everyone's attention.

"All right, this is getting more and more curious," Carolyn said, looking hard at Vincent who was still hidden in the shadows beyond the door.

"It's all right, Vincent..." Catherine held out one hand. "These are some new friends of ours." She glanced at the other three. "Michael Knight from LA and Carolyn and Daniel Gregg from Maine. They've all come to help Diana and I solve the mystery."

"I see..." Vincent said softly, as he walked slowly forward. "And yet the mystery remains that one of you is not entirely human."

"Hey, man..." Michael immediately raised both hands. "I can say I am one hundred percent, red-blooded, homo sapiens. Ask anyone who knows me."

"Do you class yourself as entirely human, Sir?" Daniel asked, walking forward to peer into the tunnel. "I felt you before, as we walked above. Your empathic powers are quite remarkable. I would say almost super human."

Vincent looked him up and down, his face still hidden in the shelter of his cloak's hood. "The spirit of the original Captain Gregg, and not his descendant, asks me that question?"

"We don't mean you any harm," Carolyn stepped quickly into the space between them.

"It's all right," Catherine intervened. "Diana Bennett already knows the truth about both Vincent and our son, Jacob. She helped Vincent to search for Jacob when he was first born. Vincent has agreed to help with the investigation in any way he can."

"If you need our help then we are more than happy to contribute," Carolyn told them. "We have a couple of days free before we fly back to Maine."

"Flying, there's the rub," Daniel muttered. "Man was made to walk or sail."

Vincent straightened into the space between the others and the door. He nodded to Catherine before he pushed his hood back to reveal himself completely. There was a low whistle from Michael as he looked him over from head to toe.

Daniel nodded his head wisely. "As I said. There are those in this world who also look and are super human." He held out one hand. "Welcome aboard our ship. We can always use a good crewman."

The two tall, broad-shouldered, powerful men shook hands as the others looked on. The two women exchanged knowing glances as Michael did his best to assimilate all he had just seen and heard.

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The next morning at the DA's office they gathered to go over their notes and make further plans. It was soon noted that the DA's secretary had left a note saying he had gone off on a family emergency. It seemed to be of no matter until it was also noticed the address the man had given was in Schooner Bay!

It seemed the secretary had been trailing Catherine in Central Park but had kept his distance. But he had been close enough to overhear the discussion that had gone on among the others.

What no one else had realized until then was that the secretary was their leak to Gabriel's right-hand man, Jonathan Pope.

Catherine had already suggested the man had returned to New York and picked up where Gabriel left off. The secretary had been putting the team in the closest conference room so he could listen in on the discussion and report it back to Jonathan Pope.

"Hang on..." Michael frowned at Carolyn. "Do you remember a guy called Simon Clark from Schooner Bay? He's the secretary from the DA's office who's gone missing. You said you knew all the people who lived there."

"No one by that name lives there," she replied, looking to her husband for confirmation.

"Schooner Bay is a very small town," Daniel continued. "Maybe they figured you wouldn't know anyone there and it was safe bet to name the place as their home town."

Michael nodded. "Yeah, well they didn't figure on us finding you two. Chalk that up as a win for us. We'll get him before he has the chance to tell his boss everything."

Everyone agreed that a trip up to Maine was called for to track the man down before he could link up with his boss and spill all he knew. But on their way to the airport, the team was ambushed by Pope and his henchmen, including the missing secretary.

Vincent and Jacob both sensed Catherine's fear and they rushed to rescue everyone. Vincent rode on the top of the closest subway car, while Jacob was inside waiting to jump off as soon as his father gave the signal.

An ambush was planned and executed. Pope and his henchmen were arrested and taken away while Vincent hid out of sight to watch over them all.

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## **Epilogue**

At his trial, Pope was finally found guilty of all his heinous crimes and sentenced to death under New York state law. His followers were sentenced to life in prison without any hope of parole. Everyone involved in the case breathed a long sigh of relief it was finally all over and the bad men had been uncovered.

After the trial, they were all invited down to the tunnels for a well-deserved party. Carolyn and Daniel flew back to New York from Maine to join the festivities. Joe was finally allowed to meet Vincent and Jacob. He brought along several packets of chocolate-covered cheese nuggets to celebrate the welcome event. He took great pleasure in sharing them out among the tunnel dwellers, much to Catherine's look of total disgust. Joe grinned, enjoying ribbing her as he always did as he stuffed his face with the treats.

Stuck up on the surface at the tunnel entrance, KITT idled away the time by going back over his notes and observations. He remembered he buzzed Michael with the commlink when the FLAG employees were at dinner with the Greggs. KITT knew there was something different about Daniel that night. And the reason the team realized that the secretary was not from Schooner Bay went back to what Carolyn had said at that dinner. She had said that everyone knew everyone else in the small town.

"All things do seem to work out in the end," KITT mused. "But it seems it needs humans to truly make it so. Logic can only take me so far."

The single red light on his hood ran side to side as he contemplated the tunnel entrance. Michael had activated the commlink so the car could see all that was going on deep below the

park. Everyone seemed to be having an excellent time with all their new friends and while KITT could envy them their new connections, he was also happy he was only a car and didn't need the complicated tangle of human emotions and their need to make new friends.

*Or so he thought...*

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*"Out of suffering have emerged the strongest souls; the most massive characters are seared with scars..."*

***Kahlil Gibran***