

Detour

Coming and Going

By Rowan Elizabeth

BRIGID LANGUISHES in the morning light filtering through the shades. The sheets are rucked up from their thrashing the night before. The comforter is fluffed as if to make a nest. Brigid slides the soft linens against every inch of her naked skin and smiles into her pillow.

Shelly's heat is just inches from her back, and she rolls over to look at her. Shelly's blonde locks are spread over her pillow, one tendril dangerously close to poking her in the eye. Brigid reaches out to help avoid the obvious loss of sight.

"Why are you waking me up?" Shelly half grumbles.

"I saved your right eye from certain blindness. You should thank me." Brigid snuggles closer to her lover's curves.

"Dear God, woman—let me sleep." Ignoring her plea, Brigid wraps an arm around Shelly's shoulders and flops a leg over her hips. Shelly wiggles closer.

"You're pushing me off the bed, silly," Shelly says.

"Then get over here." Brigid wraps her arms around the blonde's waist and pulls her. "I won't let you fall."

"There's no chance of me sleeping any more, is there?" Shelly smiles and finally opens her huge blue eyes.

"You know I'll let you sleep if you need to."

“Sure you will.”

Brigid twists her fingers into Shelly’s long hair and pulls her into a kiss—a kiss just an inch left of her full lips. Shelly’s cheek plumps with her grin. Brigid grabs a nibble of her flesh between her teeth and then licks Shelly’s cheek.

Shelly laughs and shakes her head. “Weirdo.”

“Yeah. But you love me.”

“You know I do.”

Brigid leans back to look at her lover, whose eyes flutter and close as she rolls onto her back. Brigid runs her hand down Shelly’s arm and pulls back the covers to expose the most perfect breasts she’s ever seen. Chewing her bottom lip, Brigid stretches her hand down Shelly’s thigh.

“I want to smell you.” Brigid bows her head and takes in the musky scent, warm from sleep and heated by touch. She tickles her nose up the flat belly and nuzzles between Shelly’s breasts. She nips at her neck and kisses her hard. Shelly runs her long fingers into Brigid’s short, dark hair and draws the kiss in.

“Can’t play now, babe. I’ve got to get to the shop and start work on that damn Mustang.” Shelly pulls back the covers and practically leaps out of the bed. Grabbing her jeans from the bed post, she explains, “I’ve got to get the new suspension up and switch out the drum brakes for disk.”

“Oh, come on. You could stay with me for just a bit.”

“Easy for you to say. All you have to do is get on the phone and talk your clients into spending their advertising dollars. You can do that in your sleep.”

Brigid bristles just a little. “In my sleep? I suppose that’s a compliment.”

“Look, I’m just saying you’re not liable to lose a finger speed dialing.”

Brigid has heard this tirade on the differences in their work just a few too many times. “I bring in just as much money as you do...”

“I know you do baby. Sorry, I gotta run.” With a kiss, Shelly is out the bedroom door, her feet pounding down the stairs of the house they built and have shared for the last year.

Business at Shelly and her father’s auto shop is booming. Muscle cars of all breeds come from around the States to have life breathed into them in the garage. The waiting list for their services will allow them to add another mechanic soon. And they will expand the shop. It’s all business, all the time.

Goddamn her! Goddamn her smug acceptance that Brigid is always there and doesn’t mind the semi-snide comments. It’s all a joke, right? All in fun? Brigid can accept the playful jabs if they aren’t the main form of affectionate patter.

Shelly even cuddles to that mastiff more than to Brigid. Cutesy-poo terms of endearments; hell, she even kisses the beast on the snout before kissing her!

Fuck! I’m just nit-picking. Shelly’s a good woman and she loves me. More importantly, I love her.

Brigid sits up in the softness of the comforter thinking of last night’s profound lovemaking. Shelly had made her come over and over again, showing her G-spot no mercy. No one has ever known her body so well. Brigid has never encountered a better, more giving lover.

But...

There's no hashing it out. There's no time.

African Lion cubs are on the way, and the Indianapolis Zoo is looking for the best representation available. Today is Brigid's day to pitch her approach. Fully prepared after a month's work at all hours, she feels like a marketing genius. Her regular accounts maintain her lifestyle nicely, but this would be a foot in a very big door.

After her shower, Brigid sneaks a peek at herself in the foggy mirror and smiles. Pretty good, even with the few extra pounds. Her hips have rounded out and her breasts carry a new weight, but her waist is still small and tight. Shelly loves to step up behind her and grab handfuls of breast. The thought makes Brigid smile. She dresses in slacks and a silk blouse and hops down the cabin steps.

Brigid climbs into her Hemi 'Cuda and heads north to Indy. She has some big cats to tend to.

“FURTHERMORE, I REALIZE you have probably heard the pitch to let the public name the cubs. And, of course, that can be done. But I would suggest naming the cubs ahead of time with meaningful African names. Akia means First Born and Banji is Second Born of Twins. And here's why...”

Brigid clicks her PowerPoint presentation forward. “The Indianapolis Zoo has a strong representation of African animals. Not only are Mwangi and his lioness, Cyrah, expecting, but I understand the African Wild Dogs will be having a litter about the same time. Let's make a celebration of the beauty of African animals and the continuation of the species.”

The board listens intently. A small group of zookeepers are gathered in the back of the room, all with excited looks on their faces.

Brigid shines her good-natured smile and ties it up. “And if we’re lucky, those little African Pygmy Goats will breed, and we’ll have babies everywhere!”

Enthusiastic questions from the board and keepers follow and the presentation wraps up. Brigid gets the distinct impression she’s done a damn good job. She gathers her laptop and the remaining handouts.

“So you like our carnivores?”

Brigid turns to the senior keeper of the lions, a beautiful girl with bronze skin and waves of deep brown hair. In her heels, Brigid stands several inches taller than the keeper, who wears work boots with her khaki uniform.

“I do. All animals are amazing, but your lions and dogs have such powerful energy.” She holds out her hand. “I’m Brigid.”

“Josie.” The women shake hands, but hold eye contact a bit longer than is usually comfortable. “Come by some time this week, and I’ll introduce you to my cats and dogs. You can get to know the wildlife.”

“You’re on.”

BRIGID MAKES the two hour drive back to Taswell, and pulls into the shop at half past six. Shelly looks up at the sound of the ‘Cuda and smiles, but just as easily returns to her work. She’s filthy—awash in grease and car grime and is sixteen shades of hot for it. Other than the mastiff, Ursa, the shop is empty. Shelly’s dad and their main man, Culley, have cut out for home.

Brigid licks her lips in a filthy thought of her own. She pulls the car around back, off the highway, and, in the front seat, shimmies out

of her blouse and pants. All that's left is her French-cut, black lace panties, matching bra, and Prada heels.

She sneaks around the front of the Hemi, running her hand over its angles, and hides behind the sliding metal door of the garage. She peeks at her lover futzing with the front driver's wheel. She steps out into the glare of the overhead lights with a tilt of her hip.

"Hey, baby. You about done for the night?"

Shelly looks up and Brigid feels devoured by her gaze. "Get those fancy britches over here."

Brigid saunters over, pristine and clean, to the grease pit. She has very definite ideas of how this will go. So much of it relies on the sacrificing of her high-end lingerie to greasy hands. It will be...

Whack! Shelly smacks a dirty handprint on the fleshy part of Brigid's bottom. "Would you look at this damn Ford? I'm making killer time."

Brigid sways her hips just a bit and runs a hand over her cleavage. "Looks like a good stopping point."

"Let me get this side done, and I'll be right up to the house."

Brigid sets her jaw, purses her lips and considers working the seduction again. Instead she tries another angle. "The zoo project looks really good. Why don't you get cleaned up and we'll go over to Milltown to celebrate?"

"What? Oh, yeah—the zoo. They liked it?"

"They all but offered me the deal. I get to go back to get to know the animals."

"Okay—I'll finish this one part, and then be up to the house. We'll head out to dinner."

“Fine.” Brigid swivels on her high heels and stalks to her car.

Driving the dark back roads to the house, Brigid thinks of a time when her hundred-dollar ensemble would have been turned into a shop rag. The sheer mechanical prowess of that woman in the shop is enough to make Brigid weak. Why doesn't Brigid do the same to Shelly anymore?

Brigid stands in front of the mirror much like she did earlier in the morning, only this time she considers the grease smear on her buttock. Sadness slips over her in spite of her victory at the zoo. What fun is it without her best girl to share the joy?

She peels off the lace and hops into the shower to scrub the smudge from her ass. She had hoped to have to scrub it, or have Shelly scrub it, from her whole body. A deep breath follows the thought.

It's unlikely Shelly will make it home in time to go anywhere special, so Brigid wraps herself in the kimono she found in Japan and throws a frozen pizza in the oven.

“SIRI AND MALERIE will be having their litter at the same time as Mwangi and Cyrah have the twin cubs,” Josie says. “We'll be very busy. Oh, and those are the baboons. I'm supposed to love all animals, but I just hate those poop-throwers.”

Brigid's been laughing all morning with Josie. The petite keeper has a full, vibrant energy and an undeniably delicious little body. The slight show of veins in her arms and the cut of her uniform over her fat-free form make it obvious she works out often.

I shouldn't even be looking, thinks Brigid.

“I'll show you the big cats when I feed them. We feed the pups first.” Josie leads Brigid behind the sanctuary blind and into the

room with the dogs' crates. As soon as the door closes, the dogs know it's treat time.

"We bring them in here to lock them away from the keepers as they put out the carnivore diet."

"And that is...?"

"The diet mainly consists of ground beef and beef heart, plus a bunch of vitamins and minerals. Oh, and there's rats. Special rats."

Josie shows off the behaviors the dogs have learned. Their high-pitched barks and howls go right through Brigid. Siri, the great male, lets loose with a piercing pitch, and Josie grabs Brigid's hand.

"Isn't that great? He so excited."

Brigid almost says *He isn't the only one*, but quickly changes her mind.

A bang on the door tells them the diet is hidden among the brush outside and it's time for the dogs to hunt.

Josie tightens her grip on Brigid's hand and pulls her out of the enclosure. "Let's go see the big guys." Siri shrieks one last hunt howl and takes off.

The lions have a beautiful environment to prowl. Inside the man-made rock enclosure is an entire study facility and the cages for four full-grown lions. The cages run down a corridor with a three-foot-wide hall for the keepers to evaluate, vaccinate, train.

The lions are conditioned to a chime to come inside for feeding.

"Let me guess. A carnivore diet?" Brigid asks.

Josie looks at her with a wild, excited look. "Most definitely."

After the feedings, all of the lions except Louis are released into the environment. The other keepers leave to deal with the public. Josie demonstrates how the handlers vaccinate, check teeth and perform basic veterinary evaluations.

“And then there’s this.” Josie stands straight and puts her hands in the air. The lion flexes to his full height and roars.

As the carnivore bellows, Josie turns to Brigid and presses her against the cinderblock wall. Her mouth is hot against Brigid’s neck, a strong hand on her left breast, and her leg presses between her attraction’s legs.

“I can’t be the only one who’s thought of this,” she says.

Louis growls, separated from the women by only steel mesh and two feet of air. Brigid gives in to Josie’s passion. Alone with the wild animal, in the dimly lit cages, they hold each other and lock bodies. The smell of heated hides, moisture and hay fills the space.

“I shouldn’t,” whispers Brigid as she continues to kiss Josie.

“Yes. You should.”

Brigid pulls away. “No. I can’t. I have someone. She...”

Josie stops. “Then what’s she done that you’re here?”

“Nothing.”

“That’s often the culprit.”

“What?”

“Nothing. Nothing does a whole lot.”

“No. You don’t understand.”

“Then go. Be with her. And, if you can come back here just to see the animals, then they’re what I’ll show you.”

BRIGID SPENDS THE NIGHT in the shop with Shelly. The Mustang sits pretty in the shadows—resale red with the tweaks that make her a lot more fun. She’s not show quality, but she’s a damn good ride. Mr. Mackey will be back, with bigger and better toys. But the redhead will do him for now.

“Babe, we’ve got to talk,” says Brigid.

Shelly sidles up to her lover and wraps an arm around her waist. “Why don’t we go back to the house and talk there?” Brigid’s seriousness is met with a raised eyebrow and a hint at play.

She wiggles loose and gathers her courage. It won’t be easy, telling her something just isn’t right. “I’m not happy, honey.”

“What?” Shelly says.

“I mean, I could be happier with the way things are. We really need to talk.”

Instead of picking up on the urgency of Brigid’s need, Shelly says, “Well, I’m heading up home. If you want to talk, we can do it there.” She walks out of the garage, hops in her Chevelle, and leaves the door open for Brigid.

Tears sting Brigid’s eyelids, but she fights them back, climbs into the car and rides home. She knows there will be no conversation.

“JOSIE?” **BRIGID GREET**S the keeper on her cell. “I need to visit the animals again.”

“Just the animals?”

Brigid tries to steel herself, but the young woman’s laughter melts her. She laughs too. “Well, I was thinking we could have some lunch.”

“Sounds great. I’ll meet you outside the lion exhibit. Say, noon?”

“Perfect.”

Brigid snaps her cell shut and looks out the window. Shelly is down at the shop, interviewing possible new mechanics, and will be there all day. It’s all she talks about these days. Getting a new wrench-turner and growing the business. The business, Brigid thinks. It’s all about the business.

BRIGID WATCHES CYRAH lay on a warm rock as Mwangi glides through the environment. The pair has all of nature’s blessings for their coupling. Brigid realizes her feelings are as much of awe as jealousy. Jealous of a couple of captive lions. Pitiful.

“What are you thinking?” comes the keeper’s voice from behind her.

She turns with a smile to the exotic dark beauty who questions her. In all honesty, she answers, “I was envying their natural connection.”

“Don’t you have a natural connection?” Josie points towards the silver ring on Brigid’s hand.

“Let me take you to lunch and we can talk about it.”

“Let’s go to Friday’s.” Josie grins. “It’s in the Courtyard Hotel.”

Shit, thinks Brigid.

“I’VE BEEN KILLING kittens ever since I met you,” Josie laughs.

“What on earth...?”

“There’s an email that says, ‘Every time you masturbate, God kills a kitten.’ It has a picture of a kitten being chased by two little monsters. That’s me!”

“I ... I don’t know exactly how to respond to that.” Brigid clears her throat.

“Just tell me you’ve been doing it too.” She didn’t have to respond. Her flushed cheeks answered for her. “Good,” Josie laughs. She laughs a lot. Her deep brown eyes light up, and her smile becomes unbelievably large. And, the next thing Brigid knows, she’s laughing too.

Josie is about as shy as one of her lions. “So, are you happy with your life?”

“God, the questions you ask.”

“Are you?”

“Mostly, yes. I mean, yes ... Mostly.”

“She still rattle your chain?”

“Usually.”

“Do I?”

Brigid straightens in her chair and decides. “Yes. Yes, you do.”

“Then let’s go upstairs.”

WALKING UP THE STAIRS, Brigid is amazed at the conscious decision made to cheat. To disavow Shelly. To run headlong into the hotel room with this woman.

With her world upside down, still she doesn't hesitate as Josie opens the door. The cool blast of an overworked air conditioner hits and slows her for the briefest of moments—a moment lasting only as long as it takes to make eye contact with Josie. Josie's deep brown eyes swim with lurid thoughts.

They stand inside the room in the half-dark provided by the shade, and slip past conscious decision into base, bodily needs.

“God, you are gorgeous,” Josie says. “I want to see you out of these clothes. I'll bet you have something saucy under there.” She begins unbuttoning Brigid's blouse easily at first, but then becomes less careful as she tears at the fabric. The exhilaration is contagious and Brigid is pulling at Josie's uniform.

As they fumble with each other's clothes, the women stumble-step towards the bed and collapse laughing.

“I'm not very good at this,” says Brigid.

“Sex? You're not good at sex? Now you tell me.”

Brigid straddles Josie's body in what feels like the bravest move she's ever made. “Oh, that? That, I'm good at,” and kisses Josie. “I've thought of this for days now...”

Tongues massage each other and Brigid is startled to find her hand on Josie's pert breast. Josie is firm and muscular under her hands. There is no sight of excess weight, no curve not perfectly proportioned.

Brigid pushes the khaki shirt off Josie's shoulders, revealing a black sports bra. "God, you have to have one of these contraptions on, don't you?"

Josie grabs her own small breasts. "Oh, yeah—it keeps these massive mounds under control." More laughter. Josie is beautiful by nature, but even more so when she smiles.

The women struggle with the elastic bra, and fling it to the floor. Josie's breasts are high and firm, with dark nipples crowning their points. Brigid thinks of Shelly's pale breasts for just a moment, and is thankful the two women are so different.

"Let's get a look at yours," Josie says as she tugs at Brigid's silk blouse. She is wearing the same lingerie ensemble she tried to tempt Shelly with just a week previous. Her full breasts are cradled in the black lace and pulled up high above the slight swell of her belly.

Brigid follows her lover's eyes as they trace down the curves of her body and meets them by unfastening her trousers. She slips them down her hips enough to show the top of her French panties and invite further searching glances.

Josie chews on her upper lips as she watches. "Would you take your pants off, please?"

Brigid stands and shakes her hips to dislodge her britches. Her pants drop to the floor and she steps out of them.

"Mercy!" Josie sits up straighter. She raises her hand to her open mouth and smiles. "You're amazing."

"No..."

"Yes! Yes, you are. Whoever made you think you aren't is dead wrong." Josie reaches out and grabs Brigid around the hips. "These

curves, above all, are worth killing for.” She plants an open mouth kiss on the swell of her tummy. “I could eat you alive.”

Something clicks in Brigid. The wonder, the merriment, the laughter. They’re all things she hasn’t felt in months. Suddenly, Shelly is gone.

Brigid closes her eyes and takes a deep breath of the scents in the hotel room. All she can smell is the clean skin of Josie and the deep smells of the animals. She wants to be one of those animals.

Brigid’s knees sink to the floor and she wraps her arms around Josie. There is a warm, patchouli scent rising from her jungle shorts. Smooth, dark legs wrap around Brigid’s torso and pull her closer. Hands tangle in her short hair. “I want you.”

“Yes.” Brigid reaches to undo the fly of Josie’s pants, revealing red Jockeys. Her flat stomach glides from her pert breasts into the cradle of her cotton panties.

“I had my Ho-Ho-Ho Christmas underwear on yesterday,” Josie laughs. “Thank God you didn’t show up then.”

With all of the teasing, nothing is as serious as cheating should be. The women’s connection is all laughter and smiles and, screaming on top, base sexuality. Their giggles melt naturally into kisses. Their hands explore and caress.

Brigid relishes the feel of Josie’s lean muscles under her hands. She runs her fingers over the curves and shapes of her lover’s body, committing to memory the exact feel for future reference. She tries to convince herself this is all really happening, to convince herself of her intentions.

With a burst of decision, Brigid slips her fingers in the waistband of Josie’s shorts and underpants and pulls them off. She fumbles with her own bra clasp and slips out of her lingerie.

Josie scoots up the bed and lies back on the pillows. “Come here, you.” Brigid smiles and crawls towards her and holds herself on all fours above Josie’s body.

Brigid takes Josie’s nipple in her mouth and rolls it around with her tongue, humming with pleasure. The woman’s musky scent is warm and natural. Brigid breathes her in and slips a hand down Josie’s belly to cup her cunt. She expects to find a full, natural bush and is surprised to find only a tuft of hair above a perfectly shaved pussy. She runs a finger between the smooth folds to an invitingly wet opening.

Josie groans and shifts her hips under Brigid’s touch. “Please. I can’t wait.”

Brigid dips a finger in the wetness and rubs it up to the petite woman’s clit. She finds it firm and begging for attention. With a quick swirl, she rubs Josie’s nub and brings a moan from her lover’s lips. “Hold on, baby.” She gives Josie’s breasts one last little bite and rushes to bury her mouth in her lover’s cunt.

Encouraged by the flexing of Josie’s hips, Brigid plunges her tongue into her opening and licks up to the woman’s pulsing clit. She wraps her lips around the stiff nub, and sucks.

“Oh, God!”

As she sucks, Brigid slowly works her fingers into Josie and feels for the elusive bump inside which brings such pleasure. She searches with slick fingertips and is rewarded by Josie’s hands in her hair, pulling her closer.

Brigid pumps her fingers in and out of her lover, sucking furiously towards her goal, desiring to make this woman want her as much as she wants anything.

“That’s it, baby. Right there. God, don’t stop!” Josie begs. And Brigid doesn’t. She wants to feel this woman come, to feel her body

tense and tighten. She needs it as much as Josie needs her own release.

Josie comes with deep, wild cries, ones that would make her lions proud.

For this moment, only Josie exists for Brigid. The hotel room, her 'Cuda parked outside, Shelly. All gone. All that exists is this woman, and the feeling of being desired again.

Brigid tilts her head up to look at Josie and meets smoldering eyes. The want in those eyes is enough to challenge Brigid's future.

ON THE WAY HOME to Taswell, Brigid debates how to talk to Shelly. She had felt energy from Josie she dearly misses with Shelly. How does she tell her lover there is something absent in their relationship? She's going to have to shoot straight from the hip.

"BABY? COULD YOU come up to the house, please?" Brigid stands in the shop doorway as Shelly, her dad and Culley debate the qualifications of a potential mechanic candidate.

"Not right now. We're thinking about hiring this Dave fellow, and..."

"Shelly. This is much more important."

"Oh, come on. We can talk about your lions later."

"Shelly!"

All three mechanics jerk their heads up.

“Jesus! All right, I’m coming,” Shelly says.

Brigid opens the passenger door of the 'Cuda and ushers Shelly in. There are no words on the short drive, only the rumble of the hot rod.

Once inside the cabin, Shelly stands to avoid getting grease on the furniture. Brigid paces between the sofa and the fireplace. “Have you noticed that we hardly talk anymore? You’re always at the shop. Hell, even when I come down there to be with you, you couldn’t give a rat’s ass about what I’m saying.”

“Sure I do. I know all about your lions and stuff.”

“Do you? Really? Tell me just one name of any of the animals. As a matter of fact, how about you tell me the name of the zookeeper that I’ve mentioned a dozen times?”

Shelly stares at Brigid with a mixture of confusion and annoyance, and just a touch of worry. “What are you talking about?”

“The zookeeper, Shel, the one who shows me around the zoo, introduces me to the animals. That one.”

“What the hell does it matter?”

“What would you say if I told you I find her attractive?”

“Do you?”

“I’m just saying, what if?”

“So, she’s attractive. Big deal.”

“She finds me attractive.”

“I don’t blame her. You are.”

“It’s more than that.”

“What?” Shelly’s eyes narrow.

“Well, she’s also the one I slept with today.”

“*What?*”

“I fucked her, Shelly. Today. Didn’t you wonder where I was? Or was the shop too far up your ass for you to notice anything else?”

“You have got to be kidding me! Over a year together, you’re leaving me for a fucking zookeeper?”

“I didn’t say I’m leaving. I just...”

“*I* said you’re leaving.” Dead silence.

“Look, Shelly, we need to talk this out. I don’t want us to end. But we’ve got to work on some things.”

“Yeah. Like you not fucking other people.”

“No, that’s not it. It’s so much more...”

“You know something, sweetheart?” Shelly snarls. “If it’s bigger than just this, then it’s too fucking big. How long do you need to get out?”

“Shelly?” Brigid pleads and begins to cry.

“Fuck that! I’ll stay at Dad’s through the weekend. That should give you time to get a truck and get your stuff. I just don’t want your little fuck-buddy in here. Got it?”

Brigid is left standing stock-still, watching Shelly disappear out the door. She didn’t even fight for her.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON. Every last possession Brigid first brought into the cabin is loaded in the Budget truck. The 'Cuda rests peacefully on the attached trailer. Brigid takes the back roads to the highway, dreading the pass by the shop.

The pain in her chest is instantaneous as she rounds a curve and spots the shop. Shelly's silver Chevelle blocks the view into the shop. It's just as well. It would have broken Brigid's heart to see Shelly watching the road.

END