

JAMIE WRESTON - 11

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CHAPTER 11

(Revisiting Chapter 10)

After a moment or two, the shaken but still imposing fifteen year old reached over, put his hand on Matt Wreston's arm and, with the deepest sigh, choked out, "Dad, I want to come home. Given the mess I've made, I don't quite see how I can, but I want to so bad. I don't want to run from things in my life any more - and I sure want to grow up and make you proud of me! I love you. Can you just love me, give me another chance, and let me come home with you?" Matt stood, helped Jamie to his feet, brushed a dark red curl away from his eyes, and put his hands on the youngster's heavy shoulders. Looking deeply into those sparkling blue eyes, he growled, "I'll love you till the day I die, you crazy cowpoke. Maybe longer than that... Collect anything you brought with you and let's get out of here! We've got work to do!"

(Continuing Our Story: Home Again)

As Jamie entered the old brick house in Anne's Harbor, he paused and looked around. Suddenly, he wheeled and slipped into Matt's arms. Making not a sound, though he was trembling, he pressed his head into his father's chest as if a little boy again. Matt simply held him tightly as they stood just inside the front door. "Sorry, Dad," the big redhead rumbled. "I'm so happy to be home. Thanks for not pointing out that I'm acting like a wuss." "Look at me, Jamie Wreston," his father said firmly. When the lad pulled his head back a bit - disclosing a radiant if tear-stained face - Matt kissed him lightly on the lips and murmured half-humorously, "This is my son. He was lost, but now he's found." Grinning, he added, "I can't promise to put a fatted calf on the grill for supper, Big Guy, but I think you will find some stockyard steaks to be an acceptable substitute. Want to take a shower, catch forty winks...whatever? What's your pleasure, son?" "What are you going to do, Dad?" Jamie responded. "Oh," Matt grunted, "I thought I'd

work away at the word processor for a little while and see what I can do about a chapter that just won't work." "May I grab a shower and then relax in your office?" the redheaded kid asked. "I promise that I won't interrupt your writing." "Done!" Matt laughed delightedly. Putting a big hand around the back of Jamie's neck, he looked into his eyes, gently pressed their foreheads together, and growled, "Now get upstairs and do your thing!"

Sometime later, completely engrossed in trying to clarify a complex argument, Matt suddenly realized that something was "different". Rising one step on the level of consciousness, he realized that there was a faint odor...a scent that he loved...but hadn't smelled for some time... At the same moment, he instinctively realized that there was a "presence" on the carpet next to his desk chair. Absentmindedly, he reached out a hand, encountered a lock of hair (or something similar), and began twisting it around his fingers. As his hand dropped lower, it encountered warm (and very muscular) flesh. "Ah," he snickered. "My boy is home!" His hand left the lad's shoulders, fastened around an ear on the far side of his head, and pulled him sufficiently towards him that he could bend over and kiss his freshly shampooed hair. "Knew I recognized that smell!" he chortled. As the towel that he had wrapped around his waist dropped to the floor, the naked, superbly built young man slowly rose on his knees and engulfed his father in his arms. "I want to sit with you," he whispered...just a little hoarsely, "but if I climb into that chair on top of you, we're both going to find ourselves on the floor! It's almost time to grill some steaks. Come over to the big chair and let me sit with you for a few minutes."

Stretched out on his back in his dad's big "reading chair"...more on top of him than beside him...the big redhead vigorously squirmed into a comfortable position. As he softly moaned his pleasure, Matt folded his arms over the lad's lower torso and inhaled the scent of his shoulders and the red curls that nearly concealed his ears. "You've grown," he murmured. "My body's grown," Jamie replied, "but I'm not so sure about growing as a person." "Every experience we have, the good and the bad," Matt replied, "is filled with possibilities for growth. From what you said earlier today, I think you're doing fine. Be patient with yourself...be patient with me." The redhead took his father's hand and rubbed it across his taut lower stomach. Matt noticed that the lad's long cock jerked slightly and slowly began plumping.

Abruptly, the youngster declared, "I know you love ME, dad, but do you love me PHYSICALLY...the way I love you?" (Pause.)

Matt sighed. Pain suffusing his voice, he whispered, "You deserve the truth, Jamie. No human being has ever turned me on the way you do. You represent everything I've ever dreamed about. I see you...I smell you...I think of you, and my body - and my mind - turn to molten lava. I can hardly keep my hands off you...but for the moment I must." The youngster brought one of Matt's hands up to his lips and (with no outward sign that he did it purposefully) sucked on a finger. "Why's that, dad?" Jamie asked. "Why's it so complicated?"

"Well, son, it's a choice that I've made," Matt struggled to explain. "I love everything you are, but I also know that I made a phone call to my attorney earlier this afternoon. I asked him to put the adoption process on the front burner. There can't be any additional interference with that process. Inasmuch as you're a minor, believe that the Child Welfare people are going to put our relationship under a microscope!" "Additional interference?" Jamie asked in some confusion. "Yeah," Matt answered forthrightly. "I'm sure they already have questions about the manner in which I 'turned you over' to Craig Bristol. It wasn't my greatest moment as a parent!" (Pause.) "Jamie," he continued, "it's not only the adoption matter that has raised questions in my mind about our having sex." Managing to turn over without dumping both of them onto the floor, the redhead dug his chin into Matt's chest and mumbled, "What other issues are there?" Looking down over the boy's broad shoulders to his prominent rounded buttocks and those muscled thighs, Matt almost lost his train of thought! (The fact that something sizable and [very] hard was digging into his genitals didn't help much either!) He swallowed, crossed his arms over the muscles of Jamie's lower back, and held on for dear life.

"Well..." (Pause.) "You're asking about my other reservations. (Pause.) Back on track, he carried on bravely. "People your age need to experiment to find out what they really want," he pontificated. The redheaded one raised his head and looked at him... strangely...before speaking in a level voice, "You don't think I experimented a bit during the past year?" "Well, I guess...if you say so," his newbie father replied weakly. Finally back on message, Matt moved ahead. "But...what if they found out about...us and took you away from me...or I had to spend years in prison?" "Yeah," Jamie said thoughtfully, "I sure wouldn't want anything like that to happen. Still, we're not talking about doing it out in the middle of Queen Anne's Square, you know.

"Don't take what I am going to say the wrong way, dad. I love you, I chose to be here, and I'm exactly where I want to be. Still, dad, in one sense of the word we already are in prison! Neither of us can be himself...fully...happily. One important part of our life has been...amputated!" "That's not the worst argument in the world, Big Guy," Matt responded meditatively. "The interesting thing, though, is how some adults get used to going around partially...amputated! Takes you young guys to remind the Emperor that he isn't wearing any clothes!" Matt gasped as his son giggled and moved around a little on top of him. Holy... Jamie HAD to know that he was barely holding on! "You think you've got all the answers, do you?" Matt growled. "Try this: If I know anything about myself, I know that the minute I make love to you, I'm off into the blue...cooked... zonked! Nothing else will matter...my job, Grunt...anything. I'll just want more! Can you afford to let everything in your life go by just because you're in love?" "Sounds kinda good to me," the redhead observed, tongue in cheek. Beyond that," he said with a smart-assed smirk, two things hit me. First, I'm not sure that love is something that gets used up. Seems to me that the more you love, the more you have the power to love. Secondly, wanting you so bad that I can taste it takes a lot of energy, too!" Grinning widely in open admiration, Matt suggested that the next time a professional group asked him to lecture, he'd better just send his son instead! With that he cruelly attacked the poor lout, tickling him until he was in danger of having an accident. Jamie managed to scramble off his lap, trying comically to conceal a world-class hard-on. Looking back

over his shoulder at his dad as he headed for the stairs, he couldn't resist a transparently sexy leer! "This conversation isn't over!" the redhead play-snarled. Hold on. I'll be down to help you grill the meat as soon as I've taken care of my own!"

Dinner prepared by the two of them was everything Matt had promised it would be. Jamie even had a few sips of a good wine in celebration of his homecoming...however much the stuff did nothing for him. At some point, Matt commented, "You received a birthday present from Mr. Porter, you dad's old boss. He must have loved you very much." "Yeah," Jamie replied, showing some discomfort. "I think he did, but you could never be completely sure. He was married to his law firm. Since he never had a family, he kinda turned to us when he needed a personal moment. It didn't happen very often. What did he send, dad?" "You'd never believe this," Matt replied, "unless I put the proof in your hands." Handing Jamie a folder, he continued. "Inside that folder, Big Guy, you'll find several travel circulars and two sets of tickets, one for you and one for me." "Yeah?" the redhead muttered, his interest beginning to rise. "They provide transportation to Uganda and Rwanda in East Africa for a twelve-day 'Gorilla and Chimpanzee Safari.' The return trip via Dar es Salaam in Tanzania gives us a full day in the old slave port of Zanzibar. We finish off our little vacation with a few days on the beaches of Baromos, the main island in a tiny Indian Ocean Sultanate. We have business class reservations to and from Dulles International outside Washington. Neglecting to push another chunk of steak into his open mouth for a good three minutes, Jamie leafed rapidly through the pack of paper. Finally, he looked up at Matt in utter amazement. "Wow!" was all he could manage before he speared and ingested another savory morsel. "Did you read where we'll be in the National Park in Rwanda where "Gorillas in the Mist" was filmed and where Diane Fossey and Digit are buried?" he asked. "Wow!" After cleaning up, they adjourned to the screened-in porch where they could enjoy the late spring air. The after dinner coffee had never tasted so good!

(Faces in the Forest)

In some ways, Jamie would have preferred simply to have remained in Matt's arms for a while longer, enjoying all the sensations of "being home". Unfortunately, at least in this sense, the safari reservations had specific dates attached. Thus, they left for central Africa as soon as they had assembled an extensive array of gear, arranged for visas (at the consulates attached to embassies in nearby D.C.), and secured what seemed to be an endless series of medical inoculations. As he rubbed a very sore butt and upper arms that had been violated even more egregiously, Jamie muttered that the Africans they would meet had to have every disease known to humankind - which, after all, wasn't too far from the truth!

The bare bones facts of their days in Uganda and Rwanda were straightforward - and not altogether appealing. In truth, they spent much of the time not spent in Land Rovers in hiking through the mud and slime of rain forests, trying to avoid traps set by poachers for wildlife, climbing impossible grades through bamboo forests, fighting off malarial mosquitoes, and generally spending nights in tents...all the while hoping that a poisonous reptile wouldn't try to join them in their sleeping bags! Those, however, were

not the images that filled their minds then or for years afterward. Rather, what was remembered took on a kaleidoscopic quality. After tracking gorillas for nearly six hours in Rwanda's *Parc' Nationales des Volcans* forest, for instance, Jamie had to take a short break. Collapsing in front of a heavy growth of brush, he suddenly...eerily...KNEW that he was being observed. Turning, he looked into the vegetation behind him only to find a gigantic gorilla staring straight into his eyes! The tracker who had sat down beside him whispered that he should be calm, that he knew this Mountain gorilla family, and that they were exceedingly peaceful. Shortly, the silverback gave a low grunt and moved off. Over the next hour, as the gorillas vocalized and fed, the party observed not only their unquestioned leader, but also some nineteen infants, playful young, and females. One of the more adventurous juveniles even began to move around the end of the brush towards them, but halted on hearing a sharp command from his watchful mother. As the silverback, who had to weigh nearly 400 lbs, rose and stared straight at them, they didn't move a muscle! Fortunately, the juvenile obeyed what must have been a "return command" and everyone relaxed. At the close of that hour, however, their local guides followed regulations and led them away from the area. (When he made their reservations, Ken Porter had to pay \$375.00 for each Ugandan gorilla permit and \$375-\$500 for each permit in Rwanda. The fact that these countries are increasingly serious about gorilla preservation is suggested by the fact that they only allow 30-32 people per day to visit their natural treasures.) Before they looped back into Uganda, they did visit the grave of Diane Fossey. It is her story that is so vital to the preservation of this species, associated as it is with that of Digit, her longtime favorite Mountain gorilla who was murdered and desecrated by poachers.

The picture of that silverback and the mother watching over the juvenile morphed into photos of their travel across the Ugandan savannah, where they saw a great variety of African wildlife before visiting a large lowland gorilla family. In turn, the images that ran through Jamie's mind then became those of the chimps they visited in the Ngamba Island Chimpanzee Sanctuary. Like the gorillas of central Africa, the chimps are fighting for their lives in the face of massive habitat destruction, African unrest that has led many humans in the area to depend heavily on "bush meat" for food, and the poaching of infants to be sold as pets for the illegal export trade. Some forty of the orphaned young chimps that Uganda has confiscated and/or rescued have been settled in the sanctuary where they could receive food, medical care, security, and the opportunity to live in the company of other chimpanzees. It was there, of course, that Jamie finally realized that many of the inoculations he had suffered were not for his safety alone. Indeed, he would never forget walking through the forest with playful young chimps climbing on him, pulling his hair and, at times, just holding his hand as they walked along together.

(Shackles and Chains)

All too soon, their few days in central Africa were over - but not Jamie's birthday present! From Entebbe they flew to Dar es Salaam, the capital of Tanzania on the coast and thence by a smaller plane to Zanzibar, the ancient slave port on a large island not far distant.

Both Matt and Jamie continued to delight in the care than Ken Porter had taken in making their reservations. Their hotel was in Stone Town, the city's old quarter and a World Heritage Site. By the time they arrived and got situated, it was evening. Exhausted, they had all they could do to wash each other lovingly in the shower, dry off, and fall into bed. The redhead's head was already cuddled on Matt's chest, the man's arms protectively holding him close.

"I loved the bush and meeting our closest relatives," Jamie mumbled as he laid waste to an enormous breakfast plate the next morning, "but, oh man, this hotel is really turning me on! I slept like a log - and this food..." "Nothing like a change of pace, is there, son?" Matt responded. "By the way, you DID sleep like a log...right on top of me...all night long. I loved every minute of it...well most of them anyway!" Jamie grinned at him affectionately, swallowed, and said, "What's on for today, dad?" "Well, we have a full day in one of the most historic cities in this part of the world, Big Guy. Traders used this harbor as early as the first century. Today, Zanzibar is a conservative, Sunni Muslim society whose history has been influenced by Persians, Arabs, Indians, Portuguese, British, and the African mainland. Moreover, it was perhaps the greatest center of the East Africa slave trade, one of the nastier pages in human history. Many historians believe that it rivaled the trade being carried on between the other side of the continent and the Americas.

After returning to their room for a few minutes, they were off into the surrounding area of winding lanes, circular towers, carved wooden doors, distinctive buildings erected during the colonial European period, and beautiful mosques. Matt and Jamie were both taken by the last remnants of the slave trade that dominated Zanzibar's life during the 18th and 19th centuries. The Anglican Cathedral and the hostel next door, for instance, were built on the site of a slave market, the cathedral's altar reportedly standing on the exact site of the whipping post to which traders tied their strongest slaves. There, prospective buyers would whip the slave as a test of how strong he was - and, thus, how much money he should bring. Two small concrete holding cells still lie beneath the hostel, one holding about 50 men, the other 75 women and children. Outside the cathedral there is a powerful monument that features slaves in a pit, joined by the neck with heavy iron chains. Matt remembered Jamie shivering as he stood in front of the monument even though his father's arm was around his shoulders.

Returning to the hotel in mid afternoon when the heat and humidity became oppressive, they showered before stretching out naked on the bed under mosquito netting for a nap. In early evening, Matt finally got his thing together and found his way downstairs where he enjoyed a drink in the bar. It was a leisurely period, for, after all, they had been on a treadmill for some time. Jamie would join him for supper when he had finally made it out of the sack and into the shower. Matt expected that it might take a little while!

Matt remembered a man sitting at the next table who smiled and raised his glass when their eyes crossed. Impeccably dressed in tropical whites, he murmured in what Matt took to be an educated European accent, "A powerful experience, this town, yes? I noticed you and...your son at the monument earlier this afternoon." "My nephew and

ward," Matt corrected him. "Both of us shivered," he admitted. "Humankind is fortunate that slavery ended here in 1909." "Oh, but it didn't," the stranger murmured. Curious, Matt smiled and gestured towards an open chair at his table. "Gustav Brenner," the man said as he accepted Matt's offer to join him, "Professor of History at the Charles University in Prague." After completing introductions, Matt ordered another round of drinks. When delivered, he smiled and repeated the man's words, "Oh, but it didn't." "No, indeed," his guest responded authoritatively. "Barely under the surface there is an active international trade in slaves. One can still easily purchase desired stock to be trained as soldiers, personal companions, domestic servants, laborers, and so on. The rewards have never been higher...for the man who has something to sell, as well as for the factor and the trainer." A chill running down his spine, Matt couldn't resist keeping the conversation alive. "Seriously?" he asked in a doubting tone of voice. "Oh, yes," Brenner replied quickly. "Your young...companion, for instance. A truly magnificent specimen...one of the finest young Caucasians I have ever seen... There are several factors who would offer you perhaps seven to eight hundred thousand U.S. dollars for the lad...no questions asked. If you ever meet one of these people, you should seriously consider his offer. They have a way of taking what they want...if you will not accept their price." With that he rose, thanked Matt for the drink and the conversation, and said, "For now, sir. It's likely that our paths will cross again as we explore this fascinating place."

Matt sat at the small table, a frown spreading across his handsome face. Finally, he tossed down the remainder of his drink and strode out to the desk in the lobby. "May I speak with the manager?" he asked in a steely voice. Though he didn't really expect it, the manager was quite receptive to Matt's story. "We have had some...difficulties during the last year," he admitted. "Will you do me the kindness of remaining in the lounge while I contact a colleague who can offer you some assistance?"

The next person who joined Matt in the bar turned out to be an inspector with the Tanzanian CID [Criminal Investigation Department]. After getting the story and recording as much detail as Matt could remember, the Inspector apologized for his experience and promised protection until they left the country in the morning. "I would not advise going out into the town tonight," he said finally. The way in which Stone Town is laid out makes it difficult for us to maintain our surveillance. Other than that, however, you are safe. Though we have had no report of difficulties in the Sultanate, I do advise speaking with the authorities on Baromos. Good night, sir."

When Jamie joined him only fifteen minutes or so later, Matt made the excuse that he was really too tired to go out on the town that evening. Why didn't they enjoy the hotel's noted restaurant for supper and then make ready for their early morning flight? "That's a plan, dad!" the redhead chortled as they left the little bar.

(To Be Continued)