

Lady Marin

By Sheila Raphael

## Chapter 6: Chiefly Intellectual

After lunch, Slim 2.0 drove the dynamic duo of Greta Garbo and Carry Grant, back to Paravalley H.Q. for a chat with their C.I.O. The pair cooled their jets in the chief exec's reception area as the top dude wrapped up a lunchtime massage with his favorite starlet. His wife knew all about it, and even approved. As long as she could invite the pool boy in for a good time, she could care less what her guy did with his prick.

As they sat in reception, Carry's thoughts drifted back to his first years with Musk-Koggi. He was matriculating at a community college for an associate's degree in electronics technology. He had a few more weeks left before graduation, and was shopping around for an interesting gig. Although Musk-Koggi was a software house, they needed someone with hardware expertise for their Sales Associate position. The ad said "Associate Degree, or practical equivalent." Carry asked what the second part meant during the interview. The hiring manager gave a long spiel about folks with practical experience as hobbyists or hangers-on (people who hand around labs and offices picking up practical skill ideas).

Carry's junior college professors were mostly military contractor engineers moonlighting as educators. Brad Yayger had a similar leg-up with his graduate program at Snevets Tech. There, he studied at the feet of Alexander Labs PhD dudes. (There were no female engineering professors at Snevets, but there were some excellent lady humanities profs, and a lady gym teacher.) Military engineers work on top secret stuff, so they were not free to travel east of the Iron Curtain during the Cold War. As a strictly civilian engineer, Brad took advantage of that freedom.

As Brad checked out his favorite travel literature at the reference desk, he chatted up the lady behind the desk. She was a Mill's College alumna who could probably qualify for a higher paying job. She liked the work and the atmosphere. She was still there when Brad stopped in at the library to update the Cyberjunkies Web site with framework and podcast updates.

He recounted the gnarly story of sailors trapped on Svalbard over the Winter for her. It made both of them glad they lived in California and not on a whale blubber rendering ship during the sixteenth century.

Carry's job interview at Musk-Koggi included chats with both Greta Garbo and their boss, Graham Wallace. Wallace had a huge Habitat for Humanity poster on the wall of his office. Greta's office featured some excellent artwork that belonged in a museum. When Carry asked her about it, she said it should not be at the office given the laxity of security, but it was insured. She looked forward to collecting on the insurance money once it had been pinched.

Both Greta and Graham were impressed with Carry's technical know-how and his sales experience. When Greta filled him in on the hiring process a few weeks into his work there, she admitted that he came across as more of an engineer than as a technician, and as more of a sales dude than as a support dude. He dropped into his role running, and had been promoted on a yearly basis. His familiarity with both Fun Macro supercomputers and Musk-Koggi software made him a top performer in sales.

The C.I.O. finally arrived at half past two. He apologized for being late. He said something about the insatiable appetite of his masseuse. He looked exhausted and smelled like a cat house. Neither Greta nor Carry were familiar with cat houses. They just thought he smelled like sex.

Once inside his office, he offered them seats facing his desk. Instead of sitting in the expected spot, the guy sprawled out on his leather sofa like a plush toy. The dynamic duo was forced to turn their chairs to face him. "The good news is that we got the approval we need to go through with the purchase. The bad news is that we need the stuff set up by yesterday." They all knew that was impossible.

"We have some good news of our own. The folks at Fun Macro staged a demo server with the latest software for an A.S.A.P. demo. It could be taken down and installed at your Stow Rage space in two days." The exec jumped to shake hands with both of them, and ooze compliments. He explained that I.L.M. had difficulty with hardware installations because they had shabby relations with their storage firms. There had been a big push for cloud storage from Giggle, but Giggle's collaboration with the N.S.A. made that undesirable.

Carry reached over to the desk and pulled out four tissues from a box. He handed two of them to Greta. They both wiped the oil off their right hands. Greta handed hers back to Carry so that he could tall all at once. "We all look forward to an excellent business relationship between our firms. Our senior execs were not so sure about your presentation, but the juniors assured them that the technology is rock-solid, and that came through in the sales savvy." Carry smiled as Greta gave him a high-five with the left hand.