

another pSecret pSociety pshort pstory



Bridge Day by Mike Bozart (Agent 33) | AUG 2018

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by Mike Bozart

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Kye was a 29-year-old, male, childless, unmarried-and-still-very-much-single Laotian American. Mony was a 28-year-old, female, childless, unmarried-and-still-very-much-single Cambodian American. They both lived and worked in Charlotte. A 30-year-old Filipina named Lucinda, who was an acquaintance of both, was the matchmaker. After Kye and Mony had a few weekend coffees and a lunch together in the early fall of 2006, they decided to have their first all-day date at the New River Gorge festival known as Bridge Day in southern West Virginia.

On a clear-as-a-sleep-rubbed-off-eye-can-see, refreshingly-brisk-after-a-long-hot-humid-summer, blue-skied Saturday morning, the 21st of October, Kye picked up Mony from her Northlake-area apartment in his black 2002 Toyota Camry. It was 7:49 on the digital dashboard clock when he inserted the Natural Calamity CD (compact disc) after entering the rightmost lane of northbound Interstate 77.

“Well, Mony, we’ve got two hundred nineteen miles [352 km] to go,” Kye informed. *Ughhh!*

“How long will that take?” Mony asked, fearing a four-plus-hour answer.

“Three hours and thirty-eight minutes if we don’t stop. Ninety-two percent of the trek is on I-77. Fast freeway miles in light traffic.” *Hopefully no wrecks. / 92%?*

“And, what again is the main draw?” she enquired as they passed the Queen City’s northern city limit.

“BASE – building, antenna, span, earth (cliff) – jumping. There will be over eight hundred jumps from the 876-foot-high [267 meters] bridge. That’s five feet [1.5 meters] taller than the Bank of America [Corporate Center] tower.” *What a Mr. Research!*

“With parachutes?” *Is she serious?*

“Absolutely, Mony. There’s no air cushion below – just the shallow, rocky New River.” *How new is it?*

“Will there be bungee jumping?”

“No, that was banned after 1993. Too many injuries.”

“Darn! I wanted to try it.” *Is she serious?*

By the time they entered Iredell County, Mony had nodded off. *She must have stayed up late last night. Doing what?*

Kye looked at Lake Norman on his left. *Kind of looks like the Nam Ngum Reservoir. That medium-shade-of-green water color. And the reddish earth on the shoreline.*

After passing Statesville and crossing over Interstate 40, Mony suddenly awoke. "Kye, will we be the only Asians up there?" *I really don't care if we are. / Hope not.*

"Are you afraid that we'll be thrown off the bridge by some rednecks?" *What made him say that? Maybe he researched the Khmer Rouge and Pol Pot. I bet he did.*

"No, nothing like that, silly. Just wondering, that's all."

"I'm sure that the festival will be replete with camera-clutching Japanese and Chinese tourists," Kye assured.

"You're not going to take any pictures?" *Huh? / Is he afraid of having me appear in a photo that an ex might see? Or, some other female – some other prospective girlfriend?*

"I certainly will, Mony. Plenty of pics. Many of you, too." *Too?*

"Why do you want to go to this so bad?" Mony asked as she looked over at Kye's thin, intent, looking-straight-ahead face. *Could I marry this man someday? Mom and dad would probably be ok with him. He's got a good IT [internet technology] job. Oh, I'm getting way ahead of things. We haven't even had sex yet. How many girls has he pumped? Does he have plans for tonight? / Didn't I just tell her? I'll casually mention the inn to her later. Just say: 'Mony, you don't really want to go all the way back to Charlotte this evening, do you? We both have Sunday off.' Her schedule is open tomorrow; the test question on Thursday revealed that. Continue with: 'We can get a room with two beds.' Or one.*

"The BASE jumping," Kye finally answered. "I want to see them up close. I want to see their equipment, the technique, etc. I want to do a BASE jump someday." *Is he serious?*

"Oh, ok," Mony uttered and soon fell back asleep. *How late was she up last night? Four in the morning? Is she a party girl? That crescent-earring tattoo under her left ear – does she have a bohemian-bourgeois aesthetic? Oh, my nonstop nonsense.*

Kye continued a 74 MPH (119 km/h) advance up I-77. When the four-door sedan crossed into Virginia, Mony was still asleep. As her head tilted, his mind meandered. *Was she screwing some guy last night? Is that why she's so sleepy? We're almost an item now, but not quite. Was she bringing a relationship to a close? Or, re-firing it? Does she have me pegged as a convenient no. 2? A readily available, on-demand standby? Must stop tarring her; Mony's nothing like my ex.*

As the Toyota climbed up the eastern flank of the Blue Ridge Mountains, Kye glanced to his right at the piedmont of North Carolina way below. *Would hate to go sailing off this mountain. Certain death. How many wrecks have occurred on this incline during snowstorms? How many fatalities?*

As they crossed the New River on I-77 near Shot Tower State Park, he spotted the old US 52 bridge below on the right. *This bridge is so much higher than that one. I guess they wanted to make sure that I-77 never got flooded.*

Kye looped onto Interstate 81 South (a concurrency) and headed towards Wytheville. The sign triggered some intense neural activity. *Wytheville ... someone born there acquired fame. Who was it? American political history ... a widow who married a widowed president. Which president was it? Darn, c'mon memory. I just read that Wikipedia article yesterday.*

Mony re-awoke and sighed. "Almost to the birthplace of Woodrow Wilson's second wife, Edith, I see." *How uncanny. Almost like she was reading my thoughts.*

"Hungry?" Kye asked. "Want to stop for a bite?"

"No, I can make it," Mony replied. "I've got some coffee in my thermos bottle. Want some?"

"Sure. That should carry me, too."

Mony then poured some black coffee into a paper cup and carefully handed it to Kye. "No cream, but sweet and strong," she informed. *Cream. / Wonder if he brought a condom.*

"Ah, just the way I like it. Thanks." Kye smiled at her. *We shall see about that.*

"You're most welcome, sexy driver." *She wants it tonight.*

"Why, thank you, sexy navigator." *He wants it tonight.*

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