

# More Than Just A Kiss: Conclusion?

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Is a door closing or opening on their time together?

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Blurb: She felt excited, nervous, maybe even a little scared. Most of all, her mind kept spinning trying to figure out just how she'd ever gotten herself into this room, at this moment and, most of all, with this man. ### In Mark Cahill's considered opinion, things could have been one hell of a lot worse. He was out of his room at the nearby Manhattan veterans' hospital, sitting in a coffee shop on Lexington Avenue and staring across a small cluttered table into the soft, brown eyes of a very attractive student nurse. At the moment, she seemed to be saying something about school. He'd nod at times, even mumble to show interest, while concentrating on the view. With a touch of crispness in the early fall air, she had on a burgundy turtleneck with a navy-blue vest, matching mini-skirt, and knee-high boots. Mark didn't know fashion, but knew what he liked, and he liked what he saw, a lot. But there was something more about her today than just looks. She seemed brighter, happier, more spontaneous than usual, and in a way he couldn't understand, very desirable. Since he first kissed her back in the summer, they'd done about everything possible, everything that is except make love. And since she made no secret about being engaged to her long-time boyfriend, it seemed obvious to him they never would. He could handle that. While their first, then second and now third base fooling around was fantastic, more than he'd ever hoped for, it was just being with her that counted the most. She'd made being stuck in a New York hospital endurable, even enjoyable, although he still wondered why, being engaged, she kept seeing him after her summer job on his ward at the VA ended and she returned to school. Maybe it was a last fling before marriage. Maybe she felt sorry for him. Maybe he'd never know. Whatever the reason, their not making love meant zero danger of commitment, and he liked it that way. Since Vietnam, he'd avoided getting close to anyone new. Still, the way she looked now... "Are you listening to me?" Gwen Kaplan interrupted her monologue and gave him a look of tolerant exasperation. "Not really. I do believe you were in the middle of a major rant and rave about the idiocy of one of your instructors, but don't press me for details." "So if you weren't paying rapt attention to my every word, what were you doing?" "To tell the truth, I was thinking how great you look today and how I'm glad you managed to get back from home in time for us to go out, and how much I wish you didn't have that damn test tomorrow." "Why, thank you." Gwen seemed both delighted and a little startled by the unexpected compliment. "I'm really sorry about the test. Believe me, I'd much rather

spend the evening with you than with a study group." "I think that's what they call a back-handed compliment. But I'll take whatever compliments I can get. And who knows, it may be a good thing. You look so good today, you might run the risk of me trying to seduce you." Gwen said nothing--just stared at him. Then, in an even, almost flat, voice she said, "Well, if you want to do something like that, you'll have to ask." ### "You're going to do what?" Robin almost shouted. Her look of incredulity matched the tone of her voice. "I'm going to spend next weekend with Mark," said Gwen, repeating the announcement that had just halted the two-person, Med-Surg. study session in Robin's room. "I'm not believing this shit. I mean, there was a time when you wouldn't even look at another man. Now you're going to sleep with this guy you met at the VA? What in hell has happened to you? "Honest to God, I don't know. I still love Johnny... Don't look at me like that, I really do. I love being with him. I love making him happy. I love the idea of us getting married and having a family." Before Robin could speak, Gwen continued, "It's just that when I'm with Mark, things, you know, making-out and all, they end up going further than I expected. Somehow, when we're together, it's like I'm a different person." "Believe me, girl, you are a different person." "Robin, I promise I never dreamed it'd go this far. Mark just seemed like a great guy who'd been through a lot and I felt sorry for him. All I wanted was to be nice to someone who was alone and a long way from home." Robin snorted. "Well, you're being nice, all right. I don't suppose Johnny knows about any of this?" "Oh God, no! He's so insecure it would kill him. But I have told Mark about Johnny and let him know Johnny always comes first." Robin shook her head in open disbelief as Gwen continued. "I know this all sounds weird. Johnny's the only man I've ever loved, much less slept with. If he could ever keep a decent job, we'd already be married. It's just that I can't bring myself to hurt Mark. Besides, this weekend will be a one-time thing. His medical treatments could end at any time. After that, he'll head home and be out of my life forever." "So you're telling me running around on Johnny's been okay, not really cheating, since it's been with a nice, lonely guy who's a long way from home. And now screwing him is also okay since it'll just be this once?" Gwen nodded. Robin took a deep breath. "Look, I can't believe I'm saying this. It's 1970. Screw anyone you want—everyone else is. Just don't bull-shit me, or yourself. This is something you want to do." There was a pause as Gwen tried to put her thoughts into words. "After what happened today, who knows? Maybe I do. The thing is, I'd convinced myself this wouldn't happen and that even if it did, I could handle the situation. But today, when he said something about seducing me, I went numb. Then I heard myself saying something about if that's what he wanted to do, he'd have to ask." "And when he did, you said, yes." It was a statement, not a question. Gwen looked first at her book, then her friend. "Robin, there was no way I could have said no." "Have you told anyone else?" "I told Sue just before she left on her date. She recommended the Dixie Hotel over near Times Square. According to her, it's not the Plaza, but it is safe, clean, and relatively cheap." A smile crossed Robin's face. "Why is it I'm not surprised that instead of studying with us, Sue's out on a date the night before a huge test or that she knows a good hotel to spend the weekend with a guy?" "What can I tell you? You have weird friends." "I have good friends. They just get into weird situations. And one of the weirdest is the most straight-arrow friend I have sleeping with one guy while being engaged to another." Robin hugged Gwen and smiled. "Just be prepared to share all the juicy details after it's

over.” “With my luck,” said Gwen, “after all this drama, nothing will happen. Of course, everything fell into place five days later. Gwen would find herself standing in a mid-town hotel room, watching Mark tip the old bellhop then close and lock the door. She felt excited, nervous, maybe even a little scared. Most of all, her mind kept spinning trying to figure out just how she’d ever gotten herself into this room at this moment and, most of all, with this man. ### Mark tipped the old bellhop then closed the door to the small, midtown hotel room. He turned and looked at Gwen standing near the foot of the double bed, clutching her purse, and looking back at him. Even with his poor eyesight, he could tell she shared his nervousness. He hoped his wasn't so obvious. They continued staring until he broke the spell by slipping off his coat, tossing it over the back of a brown, faded armchair, and walking to her. He took the purse from her trembling fingers and tossed it toward the same chair. He missed, and it landed on the worn carpet with a solid thunk. Neither one noticed. Mark wondered what to do next. Then instinct took over. He stepped forward, wrapped Gwen in his arms, and crushed her against his chest. The abrupt embrace unbalanced her and she stepped back. When her leg hit the edge of the bed, she began to fall. Mark never let go, and they tumbled together onto the bed. They were still bouncing when he started covering her face and neck with kisses. Before she could catch her breath, he flipped up the short skirt of her A-line dress and started pulling off her pantyhose. It was past her knees when he stopped. The new obstacle was her shoes. He fumbled with their tiny straps until both were unbuckled, off her feet, and lying somewhere on the floor. Moments later, she was nude from her quivering stomach and round hips down the length of her long legs. He stared with open admiration and felt a shiver of pent-up desire. There had been other women in his life, one very special, but none like Gwen. Through some alchemy, she managed to combine girl-next-door good looks with long-legged sex appeal, an open attitude toward relationships, and a casual acceptance of sexuality. This girl was mysterious and guileless, knowing and naive, erotic and romantic, carnal and innocent, engaged and yet willing to give herself to him. It was all very disconcerting but most agreeable. To his everlasting amazement, they were not only about to make love, they would be doing so all weekend. Instead of the usual narrow, cramped back seat of a car, they were in a hotel room. He had it all: time, location and, most important, this enigmatic girl who would share that time, and her most desirable young body, with him. ### When Mark began moving over her body, Gwen reached up and quickly removed his dark blue tie. Next she took off his cuff-links while he fumbled with his pants. As she unbuttoned his shirt, Gwen noticed her fingers were steady. She felt excited, happy, even a little apprehensive, but her nerves were under control. Studying the face of this strange man with whom she would spend the entire weekend making love, she remembered Johnny DeAngelo, the other man in her life, her fiance’. They dated for nearly two years before she let him take her virginity. It hurt, and she didn't really enjoy the experience. But the pleased expression on his face made it all seem worthwhile. That had been over two years ago, and they had been making love on a regular basis ever since. Although her experience with sex was limited to Johnny, he seemed to have become a capable lover. She still cared passionately for Johnny. Gwen was sure of that. But it didn't mean she hadn't wondered what it would be like to make love with someone who wasn't like him, someone big and tall, self-confident, and experienced. Someone like Mark Cahill. After shedding

the rest of his clothes, Mark finished removing Gwen's dress. They began exploring each other's body, marveling at the smoothness of skin, the softness of breasts, the hardness of muscles, and the scars of war. Slowly, almost imperceptibly, they moved closer until their lips met in an effortless, natural motion. Without breaking the contact of their lips, Mark lowered his hard body until flesh made contact with flesh. Gwen placed her hands on the sides of Mark's head, pressed her mouth against his and gently inserted her tongue. It became a languid snake, making slow, sensuous love to his mouth. They broke the kiss and looked at one another. It was now time. Neither spoke, no words were needed. Gwen slowly spread her legs to allow unlimited access to her waiting body. He responded by maneuvering his big frame between them. Then their hips moved towards one another and the bodies of the girl from New York and the boy from Louisiana joined in more, much more, than just a kiss. ### The rest of the weekend became a constant blur of long, torrid, intimate pleasure. While the action in bed never seemed to stop, they did take a few breaks, but only for short naps, long showers taken together, and brief excursions out of the room when hunger demanded attention. Seconds after waking up or getting back to the room, another round of lovemaking would begin. It was the first sex in months for Mark. For Gwen, it was the first sex without the usual worries and inhibitions, and without Johnny. They were two healthy young animals, temporarily released from the normal constraints of time, place, and emotion. For the rest of the weekend, they were free to feed off each other's pent-up desires, passions, and sexuality. Late that evening, during the first extended pause in their lovemaking, they showered, got dressed, and went out for dinner. After aimlessly exploring the neighborhood, they settled on a small, candle-lit, Italian restaurant a few blocks away from their hotel. Gwen readily agreed to Mark's suggestion that they try the linguine and clam sauce and order a bottle of Chablis. When the waiter brought the wine, Mark casually checked the cork and tasted the sample offered him before nodding his approval. Gwen tried not to stare. Before meeting Mark, she had seen this ritual in the movies, but never in real life. Now she sipped the wine and found she liked its bright, clean taste. "I just discovered Chablis," he said, noting her enjoyment. "It's a great wine, especially if it's served very cold." When the meal came, Mark refilled their glasses. "There's a running joke among the Cajuns down in south Louisiana that oysters are supposed to make you love longer. But since there weren't any on the menu, I hope clams are the next best thing." "Believe me, fella, you don't need any oysters." "You just bring out the best in me." There was a pleased grin on his face. "Or is that the beast in me? I never can get all that straight." "Maybe the beast is the best in you." "Oh, heavens to Betty Boop, surely not. I much prefer to think of myself as the sensitive, intellectual, caring type of lover. Now it is true that to most folks I look, act, and maybe even smell like a lewd, crude, redneck lout, but that's just a thin façade. Truth be told, I'm not a lout." Gwen giggled so hard at this monologue, she spilled some of her wine onto the red and white checkered tablecloth. "Well, I may be a crude beast," said Mark, as he helped her wipe up the mess, "but you're one messy broad." "Then I guess that makes us perfect for each other." "Not unless you learn to eat turnip greens and grits." "Well, in that case, you'll have to learn to eat lox and bagels." "Don't believe I'd care to try." He broke off a piece from a new loaf of hot, crusty bread and put it on Gwen's plate. "To my cultured southern ears, lox and bagels sounds like a down-and-out law firm or maybe some old

vaudeville team." "You mean there's absolutely nothing that could ever tempt you to try lox and bagels?" She spoke in a low, suggestive voice while slowly spreading a thick layer of butter over the warm bread. "Well, now, since you put it that way, I suppose the right person might be able to tempt me." "And just who do you think that person might be, kind sir?" "Never can tell. Who knows, it might even be you. I've got a well known weakness for cute student nurses with soft, brown eyes and long, sexy legs." There was a teasing tone in his voice. Still, Gwen felt her face flush at the compliment. For some reason, coming from him, she could almost believe it was true. Mark snapped his fingers "I've just had an outstanding idea! After we knock off these clams, let's slide back to the room and see if you can tempt me into trying these here lox and bagels, whatever or whoever they are." Gwen gave him a big, happy smile. "That sounds like a great idea to me." Later, they held hands and chatted while walking back through the chill evening air to their room. A block away from the hotel, Mark pulled her into a cramped, hole-in-the-wall newsstand where he bought a paperback copy of the Kama Sutra and some chocolate candy. "I can't believe you're still hungry after all we've just eaten. I'm stuffed." "Just planning ahead, my good woman," he replied, while paying the cashier. "This book is to give us guidance in case we forget what to do or how to do it. The candy is to give me energy in case we don't." "I've got a hunch the last thing you'll ever need to worry about is forgetting. As for needing energy, well, we'll see about that." Back in their room, Mark closed the door, tossed the sack onto the room's tiny dresser, and then pulled Gwen to him. The kiss was long and deep. When their lips parted, Gwen looked up at him and noticed a pleased, almost contented, expression on his face. They continued standing near the door, wrapped in each other's arms until he began to undress her. It didn't take long. He quickly unfastened the two buttons on her pale blue, Henley dress, pulled it over her head and let it fall to the floor. To his obvious surprise, she now stood in front of him wearing nothing but her platform shoes, jewelry and a small, nervous, smile. "You went out with no underwear on; none at all?" Amazement and approval could be heard in his voice. Gwen let out her breath in relief and nodded. The idea had been Sue's. Unlike sensible Gwen, she liked to party and did so with a variety of boys. For the past two years she had constantly teased Gwen about being a middle class square with a steady boyfriend, who wouldn't even flirt with other guys. In exchange for telling Gwen about the Hotel, Sue made her promise to have no underwear on the first time she and Mark left their room. "That's assuming you two ever leave the room," she said with a smirk. "But I promise, it always turns guys on. I'm dying to find out how your southern gentleman will react." Sue had most definitely been right. Mark's reaction more than justified the uneasiness Gwen felt walking around the city wearing nothing under her dress. "Out-rocking-standing," said Mark. "I'm just glad you didn't tell me about this in the restaurant. Sitting through dinner knowing all these tempting goodies were so available would have been tough." Taking her hand, he led a beaming Gwen toward the bed. "Come, my good woman, it's way past time I got back to sampling all your delights. Call it dessert in bed." ### Now it was Sunday morning. At some point, Friday night had become Saturday, which metamorphosed into today. Lying alone in the rumpled bed, Gwen's sore, tired, nude body was a mass of exquisite aches and pains. It was a constant reminder that, for most of the weekend, she had been in this bed making love with Mark. While her body might be weary, she felt contented and in an

upbeat mood. To her surprise, she had no regrets. As her aching body could attest, he had needed her. But she had needed him, though in a different way she still couldn't quite understand. There had been quiet meals, walks exploring Times Square, intimate conversations, but most of all, one weekend long, incredibly erotic sexual feast. That morning had been no exception. The marathon session left her completely exhausted. They cuddled, half-dozing for a few minutes, then he got up to take a shower. Normally, she would have joined him. But she was way too tired to even think about getting up and stayed in bed to rest. Hearing the shower stop, she wondered what would happen next. While she wasn't sure about the time, she knew they'd have to be checking out before long. She looked over and saw Mark coming out of the bathroom, toweling water off his big, well-muscled body, and smiling. A quick glance further down left no doubt about the nature of that smile. Gwen stared in amazement. After a weekend of almost constant lovemaking, he wanted her again. It was incredible. "I thought showers were supposed to cure that condition. What am I going to do with you?" "Sorry, I messed up and took a hot shower instead of a cold one. Besides, I missed you." With a smile of pleased disbelief, she motioned for him to come closer. While making plans for this weekend, Gwen always thought of it as a one-time thing. It would be a sort of mission of mercy for a nice guy who had been through a lot and was now staying in a hospital a long way from home. After this morning, they'd go their separate ways. Soon he'd be going home while she headed for marriage and the rest of her life. Still, it had been an incredible, if exhausting, experience. She learned a lot about making love, about Mark, and about herself. So she decided that, tired or not, if this was to be their last few moments together... Not 'if' she reminded herself. No if's and's or but's. This would be the end, for sure. But that being the case, not only would they make love one more time, she'd do her best to make sure it was an experience he'd never forget. As he approached their well-used bed, she scooted over to make room beside her. "Mr. Cahill, you have such a nice way of showing a girl how much you care."